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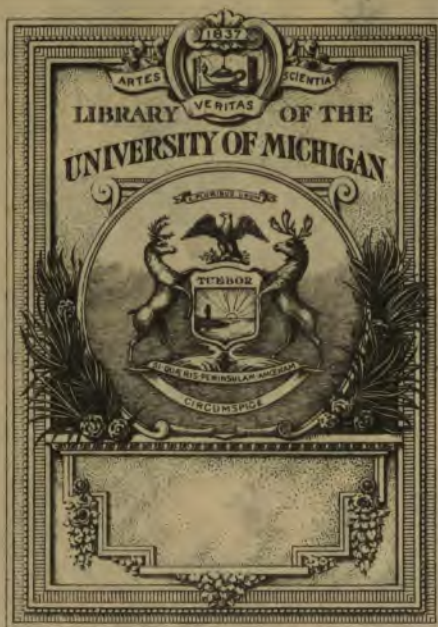
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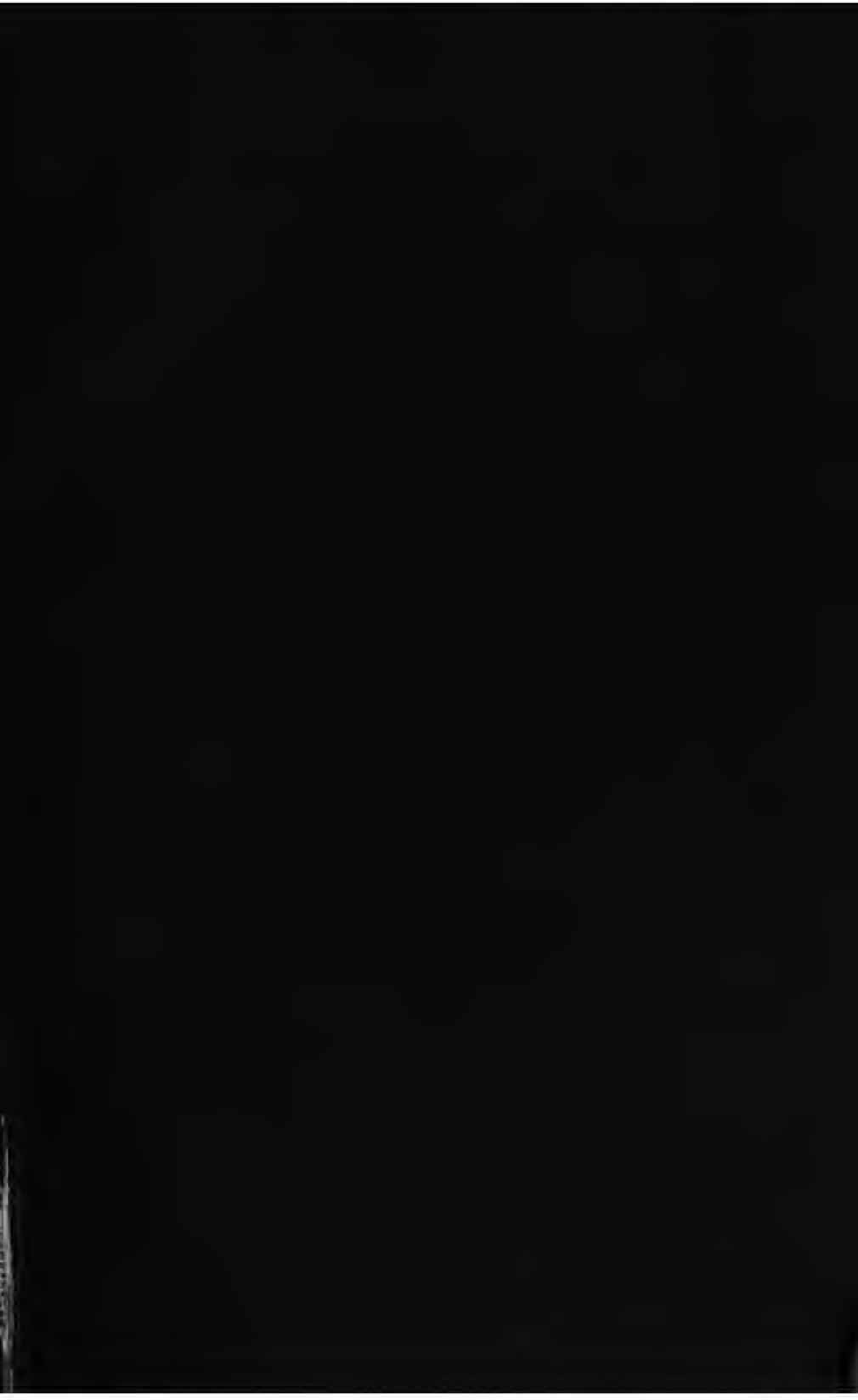
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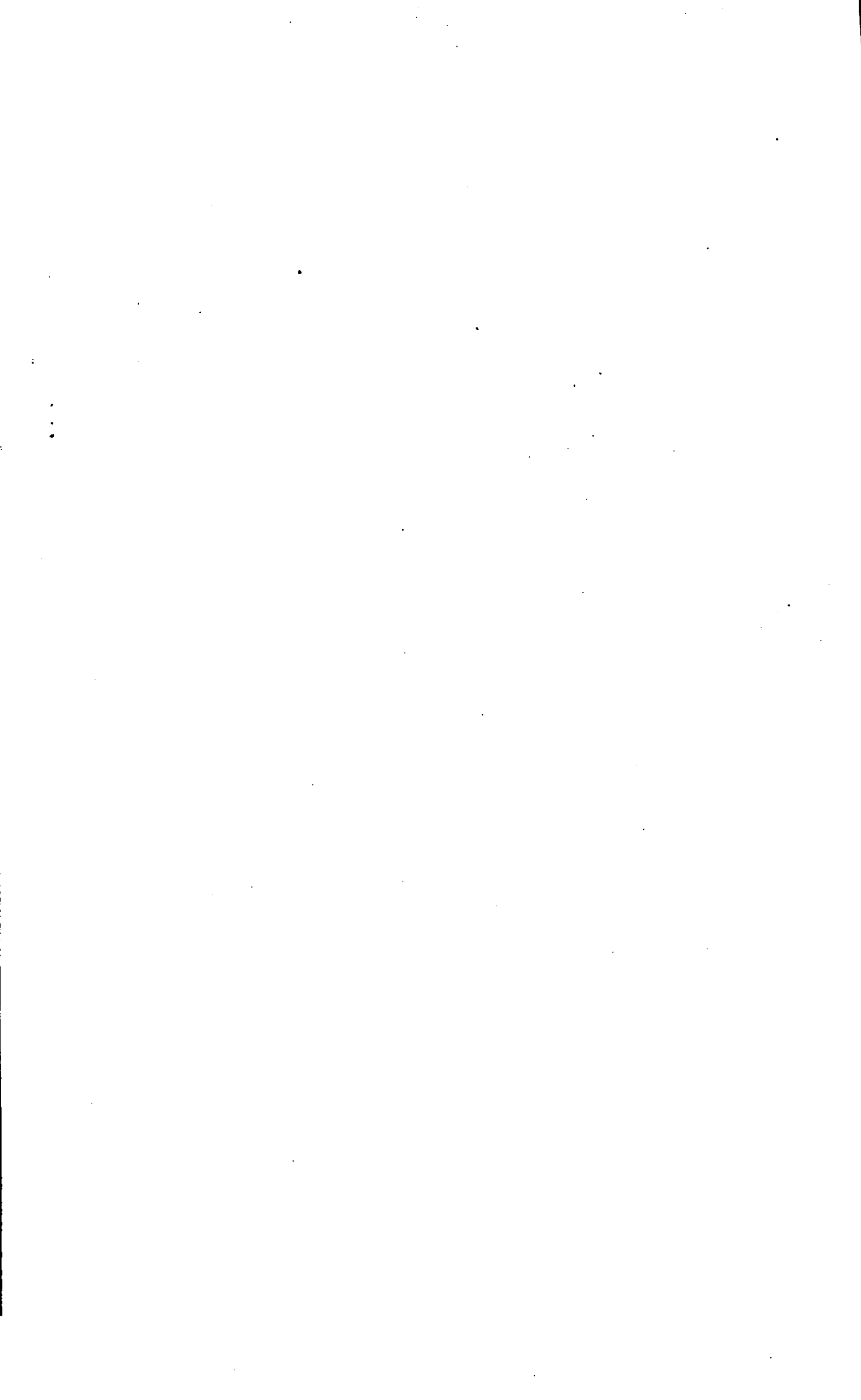
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To Geny R Spout  
from Wm Spout

October 1907.



INCIDENTS AND ANECDOTES  
IN THE  
LIFE OF LIEUT.-GENERAL J. SPROT.









LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SPROT.

# INCIDENTS AND ANECDOTES IN THE LIFE

OF

Lieut.-General *John* SPROT

Honorary Colonel of the Princess Louise's Argyll and  
Sutherland Highlanders

WHO SERVED TWENTY YEARS IN THE 83RD REGIMENT, NOW THE  
1ST BATTALION ROYAL IRISH RIFLES, TWELVE OF WHICH  
WERE IN INDIA, INCLUDING ALL THROUGH THE  
MUTINY FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE END,  
IN CIVIL AND MILITARY EMPLOYMENTS

HE ALSO COMMANDED THE 91ST ARGYLLSHIRE HIGHLANDERS FOR  
SEVEN YEARS; WAS ASSISTANT ADJUTANT AND ASSISTANT  
QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND  
IN EDINBURGH

AND COMMANDED THE 31ST SURREY (SOUTH LONDON) BRIGADE  
DEPOT AT KINGSTON-ON-THAMES FOR FIVE YEARS; ALSO  
FOR A SHORT TIME THE MAIDSTONE  
BRIGADE DEPOT, NO. 46.

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VOL. II.

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PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY.

1907.

EDINBURGH :  
GORDON WILSON, PRINTER,  
47 THISTLE STREET.

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## PRELUDE TO VOLUME II.



JUST as I was finishing my first volume I met with a very bad accident, on 11th November 1905. While going round the garden as usual after breakfast, I went into the tomato house, to note which varieties I should retain for next year, and which reject.

Looking up at the fruit then growing high near the roof, and noting what I should do, I did not observe that the lid was not properly fixed over the water tank lying under the gangway, and stepped sideways into it, wetting myself through, and in my fall very seriously damaging my right shin-bone, the periosteum of which was much injured. This resulted in my having three weeks in bed, four and a-half months on crutches, and two or three more hobbling along with the help of a stick. I had ultimately to go to London to consult a doctor, and there was nothing to be done but print off the first volume of my Autobiography, and, before proceeding, wait to recover from my injuries. That has now been quite accomplished, and, through the blessing of God, I am again restored to my usual health.

## Land on your Feet.

---

You take a cat up by the tail  
And whirl him round and round,  
And hurl him out into the air—  
Out into space profound;  
He through the yielding atmosphere  
Will many a whirl complete,  
But, when he strikes upon the ground,  
He'll land upon his feet.

Fate takes a man just like a cat,  
And, with more force than grace,  
It whirls him wiggling round and round,  
And hurls him into space;  
And those that fall upon the back  
Or land upon the head,  
Fate let's them lie there where they fall—  
They're just as good as dead.

But some there be that, like the cat,  
Whirl round and round and round,  
And go gyrating off through space  
Until they strike the ground;  
But when, at last, the ground and they  
Do really come to meet,  
You'll always find them right side up—  
They land upon their feet.

And such a man walks off erect,  
Triumphant and elate,  
And, with courage in his heart,  
He shakes his fist at Fate;  
Then Fate, with a benignant smile  
Upon its face outspread,  
Puts forth its soft caressing hand,  
And pats him on the head.

And he's Fate's darling from that day—  
His triumph is complete;  
Fate loves the man who whirls and whirls,  
But lands upon his feet:  
That man, whate'er his ups and downs,  
Is never wholly spurned,  
Whose perpendicularity  
Is never overturned.

## PREFACE TO VOLUME II.

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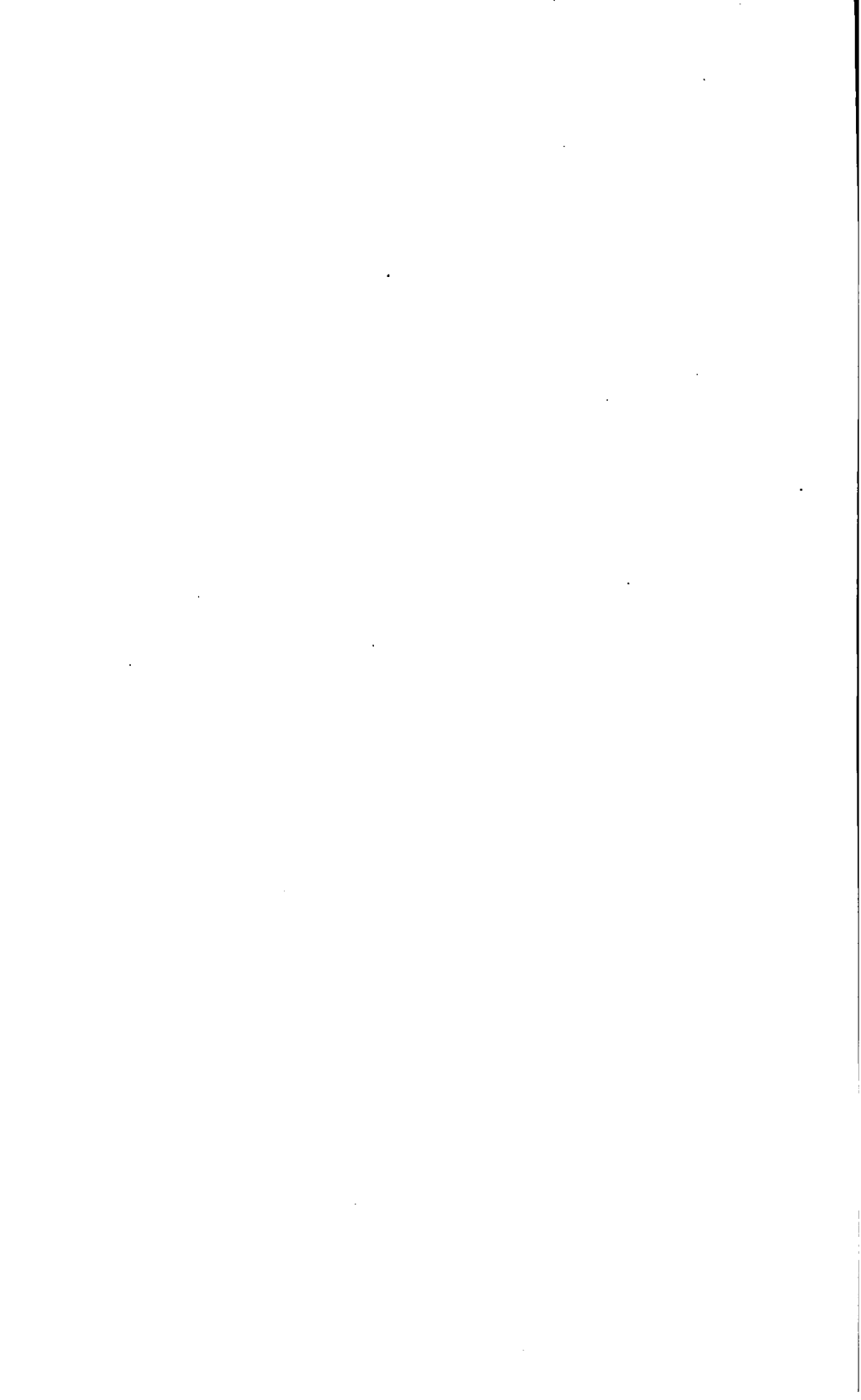
WITH grief, I am now compelled to undertake the writing of a Preface to this Volume, it having been willed that my husband should be taken away before the completion of his self-imposed task.

I should like to point out that of the seven sections into which the narrative was to be divided, as explained in the Preface to Volume I., only three have been completed; the third section forming this Volume.

As I wish to have the work printed as soon as possible, for the benefit of those interested, I have not attempted to give a detailed history of that part of his life which remained unwritten, but I have added a short Chapter at the close of this Volume giving a resumé of his later years up to the date of his death, 19th March 1907; and I feel sure that, although incomplete, this life-story will be of the greatest interest to all who may choose to read it, in addition to being a proud and pleasant memory to his family for all time.

C. GERTRUDE SPROT.





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The Bridge over the "Ale Water" in the Policy at Riddell.

INCIDENTS AND ANECDOTES  
IN THE LIFE  
OF  
LIEUT.-GENERAL SPROT.



Chapter I.

ARRIVAL AT HOME.



IN my first volume I brought my readers down to the time I reached London from India. After a little stay in town, fitting myself out, &c., I journeyed home by the Great Northern Railway to Edinburgh, getting out at Newcastle and Berwick to cross the rivers by the old bridges in omnibuses, because the railway bridges were only in progress then.

In Edinburgh I spent a few days visiting some of my old friends and relations, and then went home to Riddell, by Galashiels to St. Boswells, on the same line we are using at present, which, however, then went no further than Hawick.

On reaching Riddell I received the decision of the Medical Committee I had been before in London, giving me a year's leave. That year was devoted to shooting, fishing, and hunting in Roxburghshire and elsewhere, which ultimately led to my perfect recovery.

In no way did the long residence in India seem to have affected me in the matter of feeling the cold of Scotland, and I remember well the late Duke of Buccleuch telling me that statistics had proved beyond all question that Scotchmen, though born and brought up in an unusually cold and severe climate, suffered much less from heat, such as we were accustomed to have in Central India, than those brought up in the warmer climate of England. It is the more surprising that I got on so well as that year was a remarkably cold one, with a keen and lasting frost, so much so that I was able to walk from Boosemill Cauld to the front of Linthill House on the ice on the river without leaving it. Even

in the year 1895, in that severe winter, it was not possible to do anything like this again, though I tried several times to repeat the performance of 1860-61.

Time passed on. I had a slight extension of leave, and, when that had expired, on applying for further instructions, a letter from the Adjutant-General came, ordering me to rejoin the 83rd Regiment in India forthwith. This was a terrible shock to my father and mother, though personally I was—remembering my visit to the Secretariat in Bombay before sailing—almost glad to receive the orders I did. My father looked solemn and sorrowful, and said little, but my mother was in tears. “Why do you want to leave us again?” she asked, and to this I replied, “Well, the regiment will soon be home, and I am negotiating an exchange into the Queen’s Bays, that I may take up one of those appointments which I have been offered in Bombay. I cannot live on my pay in this country with the allowance you are able to give me, and I do not wish to ask my father for more, so I think I had better go out.”

But I have always kept the fifth commandment high in my mind, “Honour thy father and thy mother,” so, in the end, I gave way to their entreaties, for the circumstances under which I went out in 1849, “on field service” with my regiment, which I had then just joined, were now very different. Next day I took train to London, presented myself at the Adjutant-General’s Office at the Horse Guards, and was received by Sir Alfred Horseford, the most kind, thoughtful, tactful, and encouraging officer it has ever been my good fortune in all my long service to meet.

At first he lectured me and gave me good advice—so good that I never, during the rest of my service, forgot to act upon it. Then, after hearing what I had to say, he granted my request. As the 83rd Regiment would so soon be returning home, he ordered me to join the depot at Chatham, which formed part of the 2nd Depot Battalion there quartered, giving me a month’s leave of absence to get my military outfit of furniture and uniform.





**OFFICERS' MESS ROOM  
and  
1st and 2nd D.B. ORDERLY ROOM,  
CHATHAM BARRACKS.**



**MEMORIAL ARCH, ENGINEERS' BARRACKS,  
1864.**





## Chapter II.

### I JOIN AT CHATHAM.

—♦—♦—♦—  
**A**T the end of this time I joined at Chatham Barracks, and was handed over a nice quarter at the west end of the officers' row, next to the commanding general's house, in what was termed the "South Mess."

On the ground floor I had a room facing the front, about 14 feet square, with two windows. Off it was a narrow strip of a bedroom, about 6 feet wide, with one window and no fire-place, which I found so intolerably close and stuffy that I obtained leave, at my own expense, to put two "hit and miss" ventilators over my bed, through the side wall, which happened to be an outer one.

### BOTHER THE NIGHTINGALE.

This made my quarters very comfortable, much more so than the similar quarters facing the back, which I afterwards occupied for six months. There was a row of small trees at the back, in which in summer—when our windows were open—the nightingales sat and sang all night long, until I took to discharging all my shoes, boots, and brushes into the branches to drive them out. Each night this game went on, for, until it took place, there was no sleep for me. My soldier servant had instructions to pick up each morning all these articles when he came to his "kitchen," below my room in the basement. What would not many people give to thus hear the notes of the nightingale when they went off to bed? But we may have too much of a good thing, and that was the case with me, so I never went into those quarters again when I could get into the front ones, at least in summer.

### CHATHAM BARRACKS

Has a nice, sloping, gravel parade ground, about 200 yards by 60, which originally had been cut out of the rise. On the south side is a high retaining wall, on which is a broad terrace, and a row of fine old elm trees. Along this terrace, which is approached by a double ramp, in the centre, runs the officers' quarters. On

the opposite side of the parade ground are the soldiers' quarters, with the main road passing between them and the parade. At each end of the road are the gates and the guard-rooms. At the east end is a large mess-room, then used by both the 2nd and 3rd Depot Battalions. The whole is surrounded by a very high wall, but there is another gate-way in the centre of the south side of this wall, which leads to the church and the general parade—a beautiful, level grass expanse, about half-a-mile square or more, within the fortifications, or, at least, under the guns of the forts.

In this direction are the Brompton Barracks, which were occupied by and built for the Engineers, but now, I understand, vacated. Lower down to the north, on the edge of the Medway, are the well-known Government Chatham Dockyards. Above the dockyards comes the Naval Hospital, and a good bit beyond lies the famous Chatham Convict Jail.

#### A MUTINY THERE.

One afternoon, for some reason or another, I had my depot parading about 3 or 4 o'clock in the afternoon, when the adjutant came up to me hurriedly and said, "Spröot, take your company down to the convict prison as fast as ever you can go, they have a mutiny going on, and urgently request troops to be sent for their protection."

In less than a minute it was "83rd: Fours Left—Trail Arms—Double March"—and away we went at the run, past the gate guard which turned out to salute us as usual, along the road in front of the Naval Hospital, and in not many minutes we reached the jail. They had murdered a warder, or something of the sort, had turned all the others out of the jail, shut and barred the main door, and were, as we soon heard, up to fine pranks inside. Shortly after we got there, other troops came up from the various depot battalions, Royal Engineers, &c., and we soon had a very respectable force.

On arriving, I halted my men, facing the building, just under the barred windows, until I had ascertained "what was up," and then in a loud clear tone of voice gave the words of command—"83rd: With Ball Cartridge—Load"—which was instantly obeyed, and it was curious to note how much quieter the place became after that. Then the warders proceeded to force the door, with orders to rush in "first" closely followed by the troops. This was very soon carried out, and in a few minutes we were again in possession of the place.

**A REMARKABLE STANDING ORDER**

Exists in all jails—"If ever any disturbance should occur in the prison, all convicts shall at once proceed to their own cells and shut the doors." When the door was forced, and the jailers followed by the troops rushed in, the convicts, seeing that all was over with them so far, rushed off to their cells, slamming to their doors—and such a clatter along the galleries I never heard. The doors once shut, the warders had it all their own way, for there is no possibility of opening the door of a cell from the inside, and only one from the out, namely, with the proper warder's key. All the convicts being shut up, the troops being no longer required, left to return to their barracks. Then begun the fun for the warders; every man who had got into the wrong cell, or was not where he ought to be, had his name taken, and on the following morning got, we were told, twenty lashes a-piece with a "cat-of-nine-tails" by order of the governor, and the man who murdered the warder, if that was true, was, I believe, hanged.

So ended the mutiny, about which there was a good deal of stir at the time in the House of Commons, and through the country generally.

**FORT PITT.**

It is at Chatham where Fort Pitt is, and to this place all lunatic soldiers and officers were sent. An adjutant of the 83rd was sent there on one occasion. He was one of the last adjutants who were raised from the ranks, and a very nice fellow he was, a particular personal friend of my own; he began life as a chemist.

**UPTON FORT.**

Just over the River Medway, opposite the dockyard, is the fort where the whole of the small arm ammunition for the British Army was kept, and higher up the River Thames, at Erith, was one of our largest gunpowder factories. Tilbury Fort, a little below that—where Queen Elizabeth had a camp in 1588, during the time the Spanish Armada was in the English Channel—was also used as an ammunition store for the Army. I was once quartered there for six months, and had a fine time of it—mostly in London.

**DUTIES, PARADES, AND AMUSEMENTS.**

We had very little duty, at least for captains. Occasionally, very occasionally, on guard at the dockyard, which was an amusing place, with many things to see of interest in the shipbuilding line.

I remember a remarkably clever piece of machinery for making oars. A long slip of wood went in at one end and came out as a beautiful fully finished oar at the other. The most remarkable thing in the dockyard was the gigantic wooden sheds, with skylights, under which the large ships were built.

There were nice walks about in the country in all directions. To Blue Bell Hill, on the road to Maidstone—where years afterwards I commanded the brigade depot—was one. A pretty walk also was over Rochester Bridge and on to Chobham, where, in spring, was the most beautiful display of rhododendrons in remarkable quantities in the woods. It was easy to get to Gravesend, 9 miles off, by numerous trains from Strood, and back. There were the Rosierville Gardens, "The place to spend a happy day," and many a happy afternoon I have spent there. The great charm to me was the American bowling alley, where I seldom got beaten. The garden was a very pretty place, made out of an old chalk quarry—the chalk having been taken from time immemorial for ballast for vessels leaving the Port of London. There was a capital dancing floor, and nice music every evening. The pier too was often used for dancing, and in these places the houries of Gravesend and elsewhere assembled. They were mostly all nice respectable girls, and all I can say of them is, "Honi soit qui mal y pense." The gardens were beautifully kept, and I had the pleasure of knowing the Rosier family, who owned them, quite intimately.

There were, as now, two lines of railways at quite reasonable fares—one the London, Chatham, and Dover, which landed us first at Battersea Bridge, and afterwards at Victoria; and the other from Strood, which took us to London Bridge and Charing Cross *via* Gravesend and Greenwich. I very often used them.

I had one of my horses up with me, which I hunted all the winter, and drove in a very smart green dog-cart all the summer, and which gave me a freedom not enjoyed by many of my brother officers, and led to my having a large number of friends amongst the surrounding gentry for a circle of 10 or 12 miles.

#### 91st HIGHLANDERS.

This regiment, which I ultimately commanded for so long, had its depot at Chatham when I was there, and was quartered in the Brompton Barracks (Huts). Well I remember when its Highland uniform was restored to it, for it, with many other Highland regiments, were necessarily deprived of their distinguishing uniforms when on field service at the time of the Peninsular War.



ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL, KENT,  
1864.



GILLINGHAM CHURCH, KENT,  
1864.



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Our London amusements were numerous, and, to us, delightful. We had, of course, as now (though not by any means in such numbers) the theatres, the Agricultural Hall and its varied shows — Evans' — ("Gentlemen, dine at Evans'") — in Covent Garden, gave us excellent comic songs. There was "Cremorne Gardens Gay," which are now done away with—more's the pity—and there was Epsom and the Derby, Ascot on the Cup day, and the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race, just as now.

"One afternoon, I thought I'd go to Cremorne Gardens Gay,  
Just as Green in his balloon was about to 'fake away,'  
And, being very old pals, says he, 'Are you game to go on a fly,  
To see what is for to be seen?' I believe you my boy, says I."  
*Old Song.*

I am not joking, it was quite true. It was in the summer of 1868, and there was there the captive balloon which had been figuring at the Paris Exhibition of 1867; so I took my seat in the car, and shortly after away we sailed as far as our tether would let us go. It was a beautiful clear afternoon, and underneath us was a most perfect map of London. There was Hyde Park, Regent's Park, St. James' and the Green Park, and not far off, Victoria Park. Away to the south was Clapham Common, where I was born, and to the north Harrow-on-the-Hill, where I was confirmed. To the west was Hampton Court Palace, Bushey Park, and Kingston-on-Thames, which afterwards was my headquarters with the 31st Surrey Brigade, which I commanded for five years, and far away to the east could be seen Greenwich town, where a few days before I had enjoyed a white-bait dinner with a large party of friends.

After a bit, and all too soon for me, they began to wind us up, or, more correctly, to wind us down (a singular thing to happen, and perhaps could only be said of a balloon). Gradually we approached the ground, and then could distinctly hear the band on *terra firma* playing "Up in a balloon, boys, up in a balloon."

#### I AM SENT TO TILBURY FORT.

One morning at orderly room the colonel said to me, "I am going to send your company, made up to 100, to Tilbury Fort. Stanier will go as your lieutenant; he is a married man, and must live at Gravesend. You will not have much to do, as your men will be mostly employed on 'fatigue' work, shifting ammunition, but one of you must always be there. You will be under



Colonel Kelly's directions. This will be put in orders at once, and you must march at 10 o'clock to-morrow."

So, on the following morning, we started in due time, arrived at Gravesend Pier, went across in the steam ferry boat, and relieved the garrison, taking over the barracks, and seeing to all the necessities and comforts of the men, their commissariat, and meals. I took over the end quarter nearest the men for myself. The quarter at the other end of the block was occupied by old Colonel or General Kelly, and the intermediate ones were empty, except one room as an office connected with the ammunition and other business of the stores. There was a good bedroom upstairs in my house, and a nice sitting-room on the ground floor, which was also used as a mess-room for myself and my subaltern when he was over. I had a capital colour-sergeant, and everything throughout was managed, at least, to my own satisfaction.

General Kelly was a very old officer; he had fought in the Peninsular War, and commanded as a captain in this very fort, living in these same quarters, at the time the battle of Waterloo was fought, and assured me he distinctly heard the firing. He could not fire a salute himself, as there were no guns in Tilbury Fort at that time, he told me. He was a nice old gentleman, and his wife was quite as nice as himself. I took a fancy to them both from the very first.

Where Queen Elizabeth slept when she was there, I was unable to discover, but the buildings are all "Elizabethan."

Next morning we had parade and orderly room, at which my subaltern was also present, and we walked round the fort and talked, and in a few days the place became unbearably monotonous, so before the end of the week I said to my lieutenant, "Now, the week, if divided into two, will have four days and three over; I am going to take the four days a-week, and will remain here the other three, while you can go where you like—only leave your address," and this plan being arranged, we carried it out without hitch to the end.

#### MR LAKE—HOW I MADE HIS ACQUAINTANCE.

I was going up to London, and, for some reason I cannot remember, had been over to the other side, and was returning in the steam ferry boat. It was about 9 A.M., and I took a copy of the *Daily Telegraph* from the newspaper boy, handing him a shilling; he could not give me change, so I put back the shilling into my pocket, and said "I will be over again to-morrow and give you your penny." At that moment a stranger whom I had never seen, and who too was buying a newspaper, said "Allow

me, sir, I have a pocket full of coppers, and will pay the boy for you," handing him a penny, which he took. Of course, I demurred at this, but he insisted. When the boat landed us, we walked up the station platform together, and went to town in the same carriage, getting into conversation.

I showed him a remarkable watch which I was wearing, one which my brother Mark of the 93rd Highlanders had carried during the Crimean War, and left me when he died, which went for three weeks with one winding up. It was not a very good going watch, as might be expected, but, as he had left it and its curb chain especially to me when he died, I valued it for his sake, though I thought of getting a more accurate one when I could afford it, and told my new friend this. "Now, sir," he said, "if you will excuse me, I will put you up to a good thing. My wife was the daughter of one of the best and most famous watch-makers in London. His shop was in the Strand, and he often told me that Old Dash was the best man he ever had to make watches. He carries on his business at No. 10 Amwell Street, Pentonville, where his wife keeps a little snuff and tobacco shop; you go to him, he will show you samples, and make you a chronometer for less than half what you'd pay in a shop, and far better than any other man in town. I know he will please you, and should like to get him a job, and if, when you get the watch, you don't like it, I'll take it off your hands for what you gave for it." At first I hesitated, but, meeting my new friend again some-time after, I ultimately ordered a gold chronometer "cut hunter" watch, to cost 30 guineas. At the end of two months or so it came, but, in the meantime, I had taken my old watch to the well-known Frodsham & Company, Gracechurch Street, had it cleaned and re-adjusted to go for one week only, after which it went uncommonly well. I was then sorry I had got the new one, especially as I did not the least know where I could get the money to pay for it, so, when one day I went to dine with my friend, and the ladies had left the room, I told him my story plainly. "Do you really want to part with it?" he asked, and, on my answering in the affirmative, he rose from his seat, went straight to his writing table, filled in a cheque for £30, and handed it to me over the table, when I gave him the chronometer most cheerfully.

Mr Lake, who was always very pleased to see any of us soldier officers, was especially good to me. He had over the country a number of large farms, where he grew hops most extensively. Amongst others, he had a large farm from the Corporation of the

City of London at the point or junction of the Thames and the Medway, known as "All Hallows," and there he took me with his cousin Robert and a white setter. We had two or three days most excellent partridge shooting, and a very interesting time to me it was. The farm was mainly a seed farm—turnip seeds, mangle worzel seeds, canary seeds, and I don't know what besides.

The behaviour of the birds was most singular among the crops. If a covey went into the canary seed, we got no more of them, though we saw them running in hundreds, by stooping down and looking along the ground. In the thick mangles growing for seed they laid like stones, and, indeed, as to numbers, there is no place where I ever saw so many. At the end of the two or three days they left me to have a day by myself, with the white setter left for my use. He could retrieve; if he had not been able to do so I should have got nothing. As soon as I had breakfasted, we set forth together, and began the day in a mangle worzel field. It was difficult to get the birds to rise; it was still more difficult to pick them up after being shot, and I lost the first three or four that I killed altogether, but at last the white setter took to running in. As soon as I fired, off he went at once, and nearly caught the bird in his mouth—he got so clever at it. We remained in that field the best part of the day, and, when I went out of it, I had in my bag over 50 brace of partridges, which I took home next day to my friend, who was very pleased at the sport I had had; I thought it better not to tell him how the white setter behaved.

### WE GO TO HOLLAND.

I went out shooting once or twice with him again, but, when the winter was approaching, and I met him one day, he said to me, "Robert and I are going over to Holland to shoot wild ducks; the yacht will go over to Flushing with John (the skipper), and we will go over in the steamer and join it. I can give you a berth, and you shall have one of my two punts and punt gun, and I will rig you out in my spare set of punting flannels (made of fine blanket), and I'm sure you'll enjoy it." You may be certain I did not refuse such an offer; I never had had any punting, but I knew Colonel Hawker's book on wild fowl shooting by heart, and, if there was one thing more than another that I should like, it would be a few days wild fowl shooting. So one night after dining with him it was all arranged over a bottle of his capital claret, and the day being fixed, I applied for a month's leave, and got it.

**WE LEAVE FOR HOLLAND.**

When the day came, one Saturday afternoon, the Antwerp steamer was stopped by us in a small boat in the middle of the Thames, and in a few minutes we were taken on board. She reached Flushing very early in the morning of Sunday, when we landed and went to an hotel. On Monday we went aboard the yacht.

**THE YACHT.**

Her name was the "Darenth," from a small rivulet in Kent. She was 20-ton burthen (new measurement) carvel built, a cutter, dandy rigged. She was built for the purpose we were using her for—for strength and comfort; so high between decks was she that we had not to stoop at all; her berths were wide, and, above all things, long enough to sleep fully stretched out. There were three of them, two in one cabin and one by itself, which was allotted to me. She did not draw much water, but I think she had a false keel to let down; we never used it however. She carried two double-handed punts on the davits, one on each side. Each punt was provided with a long stanchion gun and a small pistol to set up the flocks. There were no springs to the guns to take up the recoil as is usual now; that was done by rope breeching, as I found out to my cost on firing my first shot. Our crew consisted of two men and a boy, including the skipper. The cooking was not done by a French chef, but we did very well on boiled salt beef and potatoes.

**MY FIRST DAY'S SHOOTING.**

The gun that was allotted to me was a sort of young cannon, the biggest duck stanchion gun of its day on the Thames. She was 2 inches bore, and carried three pounds of shot, propelled by  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of gunpowder. I was put under charge of the head man "John."

The evening we sailed from Flushing we anchored off the village of "Sipe." There were oyster beds there, and, as no one objected, we helped ourselves to the luscious bi-valve for dinner occasionally. I must say, from what I knew of them then and since, Whitstable oysters can't come near them for fatness and flavour.

Well, the day after we reached Sipe we were "up in the morning early," breakfasted, and started at 8 A.M., just as a large red ball—the sun—rose above the horizon. We paddled along

the coast of a creek, and had not gone far when we saw large quantities of duck (widgeon) in the air. One after another, or by twos and threes, they shot down on to the shore, the tide, such as it was, was rising, and it was curious to watch the birds being driven back up the shore. They assembled in huge flocks, and sat as close to the water's edge and as close to each other as they could cram. We determined to approach the biggest pack we saw, and began to work up to them. First, I had to lie flat on my stomach at the bottom of the punt, my left hand holding the end of the short wooden butt, through which the rope breeching was reeved, my elbow rested on the bottom of the boat, my right hand held the string connected with the trigger, twisted round the two forefingers. The left hand directed the aim, as I looked along the huge barrel.

John had charge of the boat, and punted her up slowly and carefully; as he hid himself behind me as well as was possible, he had loaded the pistol with blank, and placed it on my back, so he could reach it easily at the right moment. As we approached—but still out of shot—many of the birds kept rising, showing they were getting agitated by our approach. At last John whispered behind me, "Now, sir, look out, we are near enough"; in another second I gave him word to fire. Then instantly all the birds rose together in a mass, and, as soon as they were a yard or two above the sand, I pulled the string. "Goodness me, what has happened?" the new rope breeching was too slack, or too elastic, or too something, the big gun went off with a report like a 6-pounder, the stock striking me a tremendous blow on the right side of my head, and the trigger cut my thumb to the bone; for a few seconds it quite stunned me, but, by the time I had recovered, John had driven the nose of the punt high and dry on to the sand. When I stood up in the boat, cripple stopper in hand, there was a sight for a sportsman. There were dozens lying on the shore, quite dead, lots were scuttling away up the sloping bank, wounded, seeking for shelter. The flock was circling round in the air, every now and again dropping one, two, or three into the sea or on to the land.

Now came the fun, the pursuit of the cripples; in all sorts of holes and corners, rivulets of the retiring tides, behind tufts of grass, &c., &c., the wounded birds tried to secrete themselves. Some I caught with my hands, some rose and were shot with the cripple stopper, many were picked up dead far from where they were fired at. Then I collected them, and carried them to the boat, but even then all was not finished, for on each side the



CONVICT PRISON, CHATHAM,  
1864.



ROCHESTER TOWER, KENT,  
1864.



punt birds could be seen swimming ashore, and scuttling up the bank to seek shelter there, for hundreds of yards from us.

At last I had collected all I could find ; now for a count ! "96," says John ; "Capital, that was a grand shot." It was the best I ever made, though at the very next shot, half-a-mile further on, 85 were stowed away also under the punt's gunwale.

The birds which we killed were "widgeon," with a sprinkling of "pintail," "shell drake," "shovellers," and "black duck," but we did not get the "mallard" (which may be looked on as the true wild duck) in any great numbers. They always (at least as far as I have seen) go in pairs ; 8 was the greatest number I ever killed at a shot in Dutch waters, though I once killed 12 with a small bore fowling piece in India.

### **AN ANXIOUS ROW HOME.**

Day after day we went shooting, making great bags. One afternoon I had made a very good bag, and the boat's gunwale was stuffed as full as it would hold with birds, when we suddenly noticed we were caught in a squall. What was to be done? It would be very dangerous to try to reach the yacht, which was about 2 miles off on the other side. We would have an hour's daylight, but if we waited matters would be more difficult, and we greatly disliked the idea of the possibility of having to remain all night on the sand of an uninhabited island. After some consideration we determined to try to reach the yacht. I knew I had a good seaman with me, and "Nothing venture, nothing have," so we unshipped the big gun, and lashed her to the bottom of the punt. John was to row and I to steer, and as soon as our arrangements were perfectly made, we each said a short prayer, and shoved off. I don't think in all my life I ever did a more risky thing ; the big waves, when we were well out, came on one after the other like walls, and as each passed, which we had to take sideways, the flat-bottomed boat came up to an angle of over 45 degrees. I never had a more anxious time than for that hour ; each wave seemed higher (and probably was) than the one before, and as each came I fully realised it might at any moment capsize us. As the dark came on matters seemed worse, for we could not see the waves so plainly, and then where were we to steer? We could no longer see the yacht, and as for lights, there was a line of a dozen or more, covering at least a mile. Which was ours? we had to guess. At last we got more under the lee of the land, into less troubled water,



and though the first light we came to was not ours, the next one was, and the relief when hailed by a well-known voice, that came to me from our own yacht, I cannot describe. Poor John was more overcome when we got aboard than I was. He came up to me just after we had hauled in the punt, and said, "I am so glad, captain, we are safe on board; I have never felt myself in such danger since I first went to sea twenty-five years ago, and you know, sir, since we went in the yacht down the Thames that time shrimping I've married a wife, and got one of the loveliest babies you ever saw, and they are both dependent on me," and so saying the poor chap went off sobbing like a child. We never tried that sort of thing again.

### WHEN SUNDAY CAME.

I made it a rule through life never to go out shooting on a Sunday, even though there was no one to see me, and I never broke through that rule but once, and then it was not for my own but for the sake of a dear friend, whose life without me would have been in great danger. It was while out on a lion shooting expedition in Kathiawar—some day I may find an opportunity of writing an account of it—but now I must go back to the ducks. Well, when Sunday came I declined to go out, and, when my friend had started, sat on the deck chair with my books. Looking up at the rigging, where we had hundreds of wild fowl hanging by the legs, I thought to myself what dirty looking things they were, all covered with sand and mud, and I determined to say something to my friend about washing them when he came in. While I was walking the deck and pondering these things in my mind, my eyes caught sight of my friend and his punt making for the yacht. As I was watching them, all in a string, high in the air, flew 9 Brent geese over the yacht, and they went on directly over the approaching punt. Bang went the big gun, and, to my astonishment, down came 7 of them splash into the sea, and, what was more, the shooters succeeded in picking them all up and coming aboard with them.

### HOW ABOUT WASHING THE DUCKS?

That evening I said to my friend, as we sat smoking on deck in the moonlight, "How filthy dirty those ducks look; don't you think it would be a good thing to wash them?" My innocent—or thought to be innocent—remark was received by my friend with loud laughter. "Wash them, my dear fellow, I never heard of such a thing; that would never do." However, I stuck to

my point, and he consented at last to the boy being called; a bucket was heaved overboard, and when it came up full of clear and sparkling blue water, 3 or 4 of the birds were well washed of mud and sand, and again hung up in the rigging alongside the others to dry. Next morning when we came up on deck before breakfast such a contrast you never did see—beautifully clean, puffy, plump-looking birds, most appetising, alongside the dirty remainder. “By jove,” said my friend, “I never would have believed it; they must all be done,” and while the punts were out that day the boy devoted himself to this manoeuvre. When they were all dry, and it had come to the departure of my friend for home, the nest of large baskets were opened out, and some 500 couple of these beautifully clean, plump-looking birds—geese (of three sorts), ducks, widgeon, teal, &c., &c.—were carefully packed and taken off to Leadenhall Market. My friend went home then, while I remained for another fortnight, and when I got back to Gravesend with my second load, and met him again, his first exclamation was, “You are a good fellow for putting me up to that plan of washing the birds. Why, I got exactly double what I ever got before for them in Leadenhall Market.”

### **A GOLDEN EAGLE.**

Mr Lake very kindly took me wild fowl shooting in Dutch waters in his yacht several times, and on one occasion I managed to shoot a golden eagle. One morning I was in the punt as usual, paddling along, John being with me. The day was very still, and the sea smooth and glassy. A light fog, now and again lifting, was over the water, and the birds, no longer whirling in large flocks, were sitting separately, dotted all over the shining water, looming out through the fog twice as big as they really were. There was also a singular watchful restlessness about them which troubled me to account for. I could not get near them, and never got a shot, good, bad, or indifferent, all day. Suddenly they all flew up, seemed to make themselves half their proper size, and swiftly darted away in every direction. Of course we looked about for the cause of this, when overhead we saw sailing a large specimen of an eagle. He soared round and round once or twice, and then, goodness knows why, perched himself on a stake at the bottom of the high embankment which the people have made to keep the sea off their lands, about a quarter-of-a-mile in front of us.

In a moment I said, “John, I’ll try and stalk that fellow,

though I hardly hope to get him. I have no bullets and no cartridges, only the No. 4 shot in the cripple stopper, but nothing was ever done without trying. Put me ashore quietly, and stop here till I fire or call for you." So saying, I was put ashore, and left the boat. Having marked the position of the great bird by a tuft of grass on the top of the bank, down I went on the other side, and very quietly walked along the cart road there. When I came to the tuft, and my heart began to go "pitter pat," I stopped, took off my hat, and stole to the top of the bank; quietly peeping over, the bird, with the vigilance of his kind, was too quick for me—he was actually on the wing. However, I fired, taking good aim at his head and neck, not at his body, and down he came at the water's edge. Throwing down my gun, away I ran to pick him up, or prevent him getting into the water, but such exertion was quite unnecessary—the bird was stone dead, and proved to be a very large, good specimen, in beautiful plumage, of, not a common, but a golden eagle.

It was not necessary to signal or call to John; he was coming up as fast as he could pull, having seen from the boat what had happened. The noble bird was taken aboard, very carefully tied up, to prevent his getting dirty or feathers damaged, and we pulled away with our "Trophy" to the yacht, with very light hearts.

My old friend was on deck to receive us. Next day he was going off home, leaving me to take care of the yacht for another fortnight alone as before, so when he had packed up the wild fowl, I quietly said, "Before you go, old fellow, I have a favour to ask you; will you please take home the golden eagle to your wife as a present from me?"

It then fell to my task to fill the baskets again, which, in due time, I successfully did, proceeding home by Rotterdam.

### A LUCKY THING FOR ME.

After spending a couple of days in that uninteresting city waiting for the boats to sail (as I was going straight home to Riddell for my winter leave), I determined to go to Leith by the Scotch boat, and everything was practically arranged, when a hitch came as to getting the baskets of birds to Gravesend. I had therefore, at the last moment, to change my plans, and go by the London steamer. We sailed the next morning down the Brielle, at an hour to suit the tide, with the Scotch boat in front of us. In crossing the bar she seemed to bump on it heavily, and turned back, but very shortly, apparently after examining her

damage, determined to go on her way. We watched her till she settled down on her course, and went straight away out of sight. She never reached Leith, and was lost with all hands. My steamer arrived off Gravesend in due course, hailed a small boat, and put me out, taking on the baskets to be delivered to the Leadenhall agent, but I went straight away to Mr Lake's house. He was delighted to see me; took me at once to receive his wife's thanks; and then to see the golden eagle in a large glass case on the stairs, beautifully set up.

### **HOW I HELPED GENERAL KELLY.**

At Tilbury Fort our post used to come in at 7 in the morning, and, one day before I was up, a short hurried note came from Mrs Kelly. She was evidently in great perturbation. She had just received an official letter from the Horse Guards, which had surprised and distressed them both terribly. "Would I come after breakfast and see them?" My reply was sent off at once, "I will come to you as soon as I have finished."

The story Mrs Kelly had to tell was this. They had lived in the end house of these disused quarters for over forty years; they were both now very old, and had fully counted on remaining undisturbed till the end came. But, without any warning, previous correspondence, or apparent reason, they had suddenly received a letter from the Horse Guards, ordering them to leave the fort within a month, the "General's services being no longer required." "Where shall we go? what can we do, Captain Sprot?" the lady said. "Can you not help us old people?" "Well, I will try," I said, "but you must first tell me your history, how you came here, &c., &c." This she freely did, and, having thought out the matter (as I was going to London till Saturday for my four days), I promised to explain to the Military Secretary what she had told me, and try and get him to reconsider his decision, letting her know the result when I came back. Having put the letter into my pocket, I hurried off to my train, went up to London, and straight to the Horse Guards, where I asked if I could see the Military Secretary. My business was not on my own account, but referred to General Kelly of Tilbury Fort. After some little delay, I was shown in, and at once laid the matter before the Military Secretary, explaining that the General was a very old man to turn out in so summary a manner, to which I received the reply, "If he's very old, that's all the more reason why he should go." Then I pleaded that they were

badly off, had no pension, and had been there over forty years, to which he again replied, "Another reason why they should go now." Then I pointed out his quarters would not be wanted as three other quarters were empty, and no chance of their ever being required, as far as could be seen. "That is nothing to do with it," was the reply; so seeing there was no good to be gained by saying any more, I took up my hat and the letter, and said, "Then, sir, I will wish you good morning," and left the room. On getting to my Club—the Junior United Service—I wrote a short note to Tilbury to say how much I regretted I had been quite unsuccessful, and then thought no more of the matter.

On the Saturday morning back to my quarters I went, and, on nearing them at the usual time, I noticed Mrs Kelly walking about with a letter in her hand; she at once came up to me and said, "How can we thank you enough for what you have done for us?" "Well, Mrs Kelly," I answered, thinking she was chaffing me, "I did the very best I could for you, and I am sorry I could do no more; the old gentleman was as grumpy as usual, and would not listen to me." Suddenly, she interrupted me by saying, "Oh, no, Captain Sprot, you could not have done more for us; read this letter." I read the letter; they had thought over what I had said at the Horse Guards, and promptly wrote to the old people to tell them "They must go out of the fort, but the General would receive the 'Long Service' pension of £100 a-year, and a step of rank." My astonishment was great; I could only exclaim, "Alla! God is good," and hand her back the letter.

That grumpy old gentleman had a good heart under his waistcoat. I once, after this, had another encounter with him, on my own account. Some day I will have something to say about it. It was carried on and ended in precisely the same manner as I have just described. He did the right thing in the end.

### THE DEPOT BATTALIONS

At Chatham, and elsewhere, were, to my mind, the best conceived arrangement for recruiting (as far as regimental depots go) which had been in vogue during the last fifty years. But (in the depot battalions) the units were destroyed by the hostility shown by the colonels commanding the regiments to which they belonged.

So strong did the feeling exist in the minds of the colonels, "that two of their *very own* companies had been taken away

from them by the Government, or by the Horse Guards," that it was found necessary to forbid any correspondence between the colonels of regiments and their depot commanding officers, or the officers commanding the depot battalions, unless in official form, and sent through the Adjutant-General at the Horse Guards, War Office. Indeed, it was in the end found expedient to absorb the two companies and their officers altogether into those regiments which were at home to which they belonged, only retaining the depot battalions for those regiments that were serving abroad.

But though these depot battalions answered well for recruiting purposes, and were able to impart to their recruits a little squad and some company drill, there was no possible way of giving them any real training as soldiers, to fit them for moving in battalions, brigades, divisions, or for war purposes at all.

### DIVISION DEPOTS.

It is over twenty-five years ago since I wrote a paper on "Short Service and Division Depots" (*vide* Appendix III.), copies of which were sent to the Duke of Cambridge, then Command-in-Chief, at the Horse Guards, and to the Secretary of State for War (Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman), at the War Office, yet, though this long time has elapsed, I still consider, on reading it over now again, that it is perfectly suitable for the present day, and it would be wise to adopt it even now (1907).

In acknowledging the receipt of my paper, I understood Sir Henry to say, that it was his opinion that it might, with great advantage, be brought into use, but, that politics and public opinion prevented the step being taken just then.

Reforms and economy are now loudly called for by the public and the House of Commons. My long experience, the thought and attention I then, and since, have bestowed on these matters, as well as the experience I had in recruiting for so many years, makes me firmly believe that, with little, or even no alteration, the plan proposed in this paper, and in the essay I also wrote at that time for the Gold Medal of the United Service Institution on "Providing Recruits and Forming Reserves" (*vide* Appendices I. and III.), which was subsequently published, was then, and still is, admirably suited for the present purpose, for I feel quite sure, if the system were adopted, proficiency and economy would be the result in the highest degree.

### Chapter III.

#### TRAINING AND RECRUITING OF SOLDIERS.

##### WE REJOIN HEADQUARTERS.

ABOUT the beginning of 1865 all depots of regiments at home were ordered to rejoin their corps, and become absorbed into them. Among others, the 83rd Depot, which formed part of the 1st depot battalion at Chatham, marched to Aldershot, and rejoined Headquarters in the North Camp. Spring drill was going on, and the Recruits were sent to join the squads of Headquarters. Great fault was found by the colonel with everything about the depot—"The recruits were too young;" "they were too small—wretched, under-sized boys;" "the depot battalion had not seen that they were properly clothed." Such was the stereotyped cry of the colonels, not only of ours, but of all regiments. My colonel sent for me on parade. Using rather unpleasantly strong language, he said, "Captain Sprot, what do you mean by fitting the men's clothing in this way?" pointing to the tightly fitting jackets and trousers the recruits were wearing. "Is that the way the depot battalions send out their recruits, sir?" &c., &c. My reply was quite simple. "If blame is to be attached to anyone, sir, it is to me personally. I fitted these lads myself most carefully when they were enlisted twelve months ago; good feeding and exercise has made them grow, and they will soon require new clothes from the look of them." The fact is, these cries of the colonels were all nonsense, arising from pure jealousy, and quite injurious to the Army.

##### THE VIEW I HAVE OF ENLISTING.

The view which I took of proper enlisting during the time I was in the service, and have held ever since, and, indeed, continue to hold now, is this. We desire to have in our ranks well-made, healthy young men, fit to do anything, go everywhere, and always to behave well. As soon as a lad is strong enough, and large enough, to handle a rifle, and learn his drill, he should be enlisted, if he offers himself, for the following reasons:—(1st)

That men, or rather, lads, enlist usually because they have not yet found a congenial profession, and are hungry, and will be lost if not at once engaged; (*2nd*) that the younger they are, the less evil have they learnt from those with whom they associate; (*3rd*) that, if rejected at an early age, they must go back to surroundings which are unhealthy, and where they are underfed, becoming stunted and, perhaps, diseased. It is better to take them young, feed them, and house them, as soldiers are fed, housed, exercised, and clothed; and, when the lads of sixteen reach the age when they are fitted to soldier, and have had the requisite training to make them understand their profession, they will be found to be smart, healthy fellows, two or three years younger than they would have been had they been rejected till eighteen or nineteen years of age, and better in every respect than if they had been left in their own slums until the regulation age had been attained. My opinion has therefore always been that there should be no age limit of youth, only a standard of height and chest measurement and bodily strength sufficient to enable the recruit to carry a rifle and learn his drill, with a fair prospect of his becoming a good-sized healthy man.

Taking this and other things into consideration, it has always been my opinion that, without depriving regiments or battalions of the pleasure and satisfaction they have in enlisting for themselves, and according to their own choice, for their own ranks, the best description of depots for our Army would be what might be called division depots, say two for England, one for Scotland, and one or two for Ireland, enlisted for all regiments of their respective districts.

It was my custom frequently, at Chatham and elsewhere, to accept smart young lads who had been rejected by other depot commanding officers as being too young. I never saw any reason to regret doing so, and sincerely hope, for the sake of the British Army, that my example then may be followed now, of enlisting "boys"; they always make the best and most useful soldiers, and far the best non-commissioned officers, and then, as in my case, it will probably be found that the "stone which the builders rejected may become the head stone of the corner."

#### CADRE OF OFFICERS.

This seems a suitable place to say a word on the cadre of regiments. There was no more useless or troublesome officer in



the Army than the old "major," two of them coming as they did between the lieutenant-colonel and his captains. They were *nominally* in charge of a "wing" each, over which, as a rule, they had no personal or appointed control whatever; they were always in the way, especially the juniors, even at times of drill and manoeuvre. The role which the senior majors played was to stand aloof, to be on the watch for "dead men's shoes" (as was the expression), waiting more or less impatiently for the lieutenant-colonel to "move on" by retirement or death, "the latter preferred." He was practically no assistance to the commanding officer at best, and in too many cases he was tempted to head a party to oppose the wishes and orders of the lieutenant-colonel.

The authorities did wisely to remove these gentlemen from the Army List at a time when some drastic reforms were being made by Lord Cardwell. It is right for me to say, however, that I personally never suffered from the indifference or uselessness of the majors who were with me when I commanded the 91st, though I have very frequently witnessed their proceedings in many other regiments with regret.

Although the majors were rightly wiped out of the Army, other influences came into play which brought them very soon back again in stronger force than ever. The strong desire for any sort of promotion was the motive power, so that, at the recommendation of one of the numerous committees that sat, when one side wished to upset the doings of the other, not only were the two majors reintroduced, but double the number were appointed from amongst the captains, though only in name.

The duties of these majors in no way differed from those of ordinary captains. They had no horses, nor horse allowance, yet these officers received unnecessarily the name of "major," wore steel or brass spurs, sling belts, and the badges of the field officer's rank, which in truth they only held in name. That was ridiculous.

#### THE SCHEME WHICH WAS THEN PROPOSED

Was to have one colonel commanding, with one lieutenant-colonel to assist him, and *under his immediate and personal orders* to command the regiment in his temporary absence, or, indeed, to take the place of a gigantic adjutant, without the drudgery of being an instructor, or having to do with the office, beyond seeing the wishes of his commanding officer carried out, which would be his *raison d'être*. Each battalion was to consist of eight companies of suitable strength for the work they had to do. As in

the Cavalry two companies form a "squadron," so in the Infantry two Companies would be termed a "double" company.

The four senior captains might be termed majors (or captain-majors) quite appropriately, and would command the "double" companies, leaving a captain under each to assist, while each took the command of his own (single) company, as far as "interior economy" goes, always, however, remembering that the unit on parade and in the field would be the double company. Those who have commanded in the field, either on active service or on large peace parades on field days, and have possessed sufficient interest and knowledge to grasp these matters, know how much more difficult it is to manœuvre with eight small units per battalion than four large ones.

### AS FOR SUBALTERNS

The more the better, for, when a regiment is ordered on field service, it is astonishing how from ill-health, wounds, sickness, employment on staff or detached duties, the captains melt away, and then is the time for the promotion of the junior *trained* officers.

Remember always that it is easy to promote a subaltern to do the duties of a captain, but it is an extremely difficult and delicate matter to order a captain to do the necessary duties of a subaltern if there are too few of that rank present. If there is not a large number of trained subalterns, it is found necessary to put into battalions all sorts and conditions of men, who, at best, being untrained, are only partially able to perform the work they are hurriedly called on to do. If, then, I was arranging the cadre of a battalion in time of peace that I might command the same in war, I should unhesitatingly prescribe quite double the number of subalterns usually assigned to that duty.

I am strongly in favour of a large proportion of officers to privates, for, in looking through history, the study of which is imperative to make a good senior officer, it will be found that the British Army have usually had a greater proportion than any other European nation, and I feel sure, in a vast number of cases, our successes have been due to that fact. Our officers are drawn from the upper classes, and our privates will follow their seniors, whom they look upon as their superiors, most readily, but they will seldom follow with the same zeal the lead of one of their own rank who is looked upon only as their equal. The same thing holds good in regard to the officers and the commander-in-chief at Home Headquarters. He should certainly, if possible,

be a Royal Duke. No doubt his views and opinions may not absolutely agree with everybody else's, but he has just as much right to them as any of us, and they will most probably be found more correct than ours, as he has had better opportunities of knowing than many of us.

### TRAINING OFFICERS AND RECRUITS.

All this arranging of cadre of officers, however, will go for little if they are not properly trained and instructed, and I propose here to sketch what is, in my estimation, required, and to give the reason why. Though, as far as I have been able to see, the training of our troops, both officers and men, have immensely improved during the last twenty or thirty years, still, from conversations I have had with officers and men, there is yet a great want of strict definition. They are more out in the field, and have many more things to learn than they had, yet, to use a French expression, the whole thing seems to be still very much "in the air." The troops go out in tents and march from place to place in a haphazard sort of a way (which in itself is a good thing), but the object does not seem sufficiently defined or sufficiently explained, and the instructors, who are their officers, do not yet know quite sufficient to be able to instruct thoroughly well. If it were possible to have division depots, with enough land for manœuvres, where there would *always* be on the spot sufficient men, sufficient officers, and proper instructors, there a school might be established for the better training of officers as well as privates. But we must have lecture rooms, where the commanding officer or his delegates can explain to large bodies of men and officers what he is going to do, and, after his field day is over, what he has done, and why he did it. Far greater use of the "Krieg Spiel" should be made. It is nonsense to ridicule the instruction which can be obtained with the maps, dice, and little wooden men. At one time I used it much, and found its advantage far beyond what is usually supposed. With it and the theatre of a good large lecture room I could give more instruction to a whole battalion, officers and men, in a month than many corps got in a year. But it should be done as a whole, and with properly educated teachers, capable of imparting the required knowledge in a manner calculated to interest as well as to instruct. As soon as we can realise that "soldiering" is a "trade or profession," and that the best men win, the better.

## HOW WE TRAINED OUR RECRUITS IN THE 91st.

After we had got them, as soon as a recruit came in, he was cleaned and clothed, and sent to the "Goose step," then he went on through that portion of his training, which may appropriately be termed his "Drill," as laid down in the red book of the period, including squad drill, company drill, skirmishing, &c., &c. Musketry drill and practice followed, and daily he had to do his extension motions and gymnastics on the portable regimental gymnasium that was carried about from barrack to barrack when the corps changed quarters, by the 91st Highlanders.

This finished, he was allowed to go into the ranks on the colonel's instruction parades once a-week, where he found out the object of his previous instruction, and learnt his place in battalion drill, &c. He was then put through a course of "shelter trench drill," construction of "field kitchens," a systematic method of "tent pitching," throwing up of a "small redoubt, redan, or lunette," and "fire engine drill." After this he was instructed in the object and duties of day and night picquets and the drill of attack, how they were laid out and supported, &c.; and after having been supernumerary on guard five or six times on Saturdays and Sundays, he was ready to be examined and dismissed, except that, if in a fortress or within reach of any old cannon, he had to learn big gun drill thoroughly well. *N.B.*—Each company was bound to keep up two full "gun detachments," so that to man half-a-dozen guns on a fortress or in the field was the work of only a few minutes at any time for the 91st Highlanders.

The recruits were examined separately in each of the foregoing subjects, and ultimately passed by the commanding officer. Nothing was done in a perfunctory manner, and at the end of all they received each a printed certificate signed by the commanding officer, which was fastened into their "small books." Then, but not till then, they were "dismissed drill" and became fully trained soldiers.

Until they had passed everything, no recruit was allowed to be put on fatigue, orderly man's, or indeed on any orderly duty, become servants or batmen, or go on guard or picquet (except as supernumerary for instruction on Saturdays and Sundays). I never saw soldiers so proud, or display so much confidence in themselves, as the men thus taught displayed, and that is just what is wanted in a soldier. To command such a regiment in the field, either during peace or war, is a treat which few have

an opportunity of enjoying, though there is no reason whatever why they should not; it is in the power of all colonels, as well as it was in mine, to train their regiments thus. "As we make our beds, so we must lie on them." As we make our regiment, so we will command them, and so will be followed by the men. To complete the instruction of healthy well-behaved recruits as here described did not occupy over six months, including everything—the staff of instructors knew their work properly, and they did it.

Besides the foregoing, a large number of men who desired it were taught signalling, both with flags and lanterns, and, had opportunity offered, every recruit would have been taught to swim. Separate printed certificates were issued to men for gunnery, signalling, &c., &c., and to a few men as running orderlies, who were permitted to wear on their arms a distinguishing badge.

These men were most useful to the commanding officers in peace time, and should be still more so in time of war. They slipped away unobserved, and carried orders to the front as speedily and with more certainty and accuracy than a mounted subaltern could do. (*N.B.*—Later on I introduced bicycles into the service, being the first person to advocate their use in the public press, or to use them at manœuvres—this was in the year 1881.) When commanding at manœuvres, either as regimental colonel or division general, I was never without one or more running orderlies at my horse's girth.

### NIGHT ATTACKS.

I claim also to have been the first colonel who systematically and at least annually carried out Night Attacks with the whole Regiment. In Appendix IV. will be found a report of the first one ever tried. It was at Fort George in 1872, and the opinion of the General Commanding in Scotland on it is given. In the same Appendix is a description of one or two carried out at Edinburgh Castle in 1873, as published in the *Scotsman* newspaper of that date.

It was my custom, as I have said elsewhere, never to give notice of intended field days of any sort, and on this occasion a good anecdote was told me by a club acquaintance in Edinburgh. On that night we not only fired small arm blank ammunition all round the Castle, in Princes Street Gardens and elsewhere, but, in the way described, we got some big gun powder from the

staff-sergeant, who fired for many years the one o'clock time gun. A good Scotsman to the backbone, he had every day just saved a little of the powder, until he had, without any obvious reason, collected quite a quantity.

One day this came to my knowledge, and without much difficulty the non-commissioned officer was persuaded (for all with whom the g1st were in any way connected caught up from us our enthusiasm), and not only did he give us all his saved-up gunpowder of years, but he himself (an old Artilleryman), delighted at the idea of our some day having a grand attack, made it up into cartridges for us, that the "gun detachments" of the several companies, of which we were proud, might have an opportunity of displaying their knowledge and their good training, by not only "manning" the guns of the Half-Moon Battery, but actually firing them over "Auld Reekie" at 11 o'clock at night.

When the retiring companies had reached the Castle, had closed the gate, and pulled up the drawbridge, the word of command was heard from the colonel—"Each company fall out their gun detachment and man the Half-Moon Battery." They did it, and they did it well. It was a long time since Edinburgh had heard big guns from the Castle booming over the town from their well-known batteries, and it will probably be a longer time still before such a thing is heard there again. But the g1st did it, and every soldier was proud of it, and their feeling of pride was not lessened when they heard their popular commanding officer had been summoned to the Headquarter Office on the following morning to "get a wiggling over it."

The General Commanding in Scotland happened to be dining at the New Club (just opposite the Castle) that evening. The occupants of the club, in common with those of all the houses in Princes Street, on hearing the noise of firing and seeing the flames on the Castle walls (for we had filled the beacon gratings with firewood and set light to it), ran to the windows. Amongst the crowd was the General Commanding in Scotland.

After glowering at the exhibition for a little, one gentleman called out—"Hullo, Sir John, what are they doing—what is it all about?" but the great man had no answer to give; all he could reply was the humiliating "I don't know." No wonder the commanding officer of the g1st was summoned to the Brigade Office on the following morning.

But he was a good, kind, sensible old gentleman, that Commander-in-Chief of Scotland, and a rare good soldier to boot. He had heard of the eccentricities of the g1st High-

landers and their leader before. That colonel deserved a "good wiggling," but somehow the general had not the heart to give it him when an explanation was offered, and he found all Edinburgh loudly praising the unusual occurrence of such a "Field Day at Night." When spoken to, I at once expressed contrition, and explained that we considered if any notice of an approaching field day of this sort was given, a great part of the advantage would be lost. "Ready, aye ready," was our motto in those days, but if notice was given of these coming events, what then? The great advantage of such a surprise which taught continual watchfulness and readiness, knowledge of, and instant obedience to, standing orders, and the bugle sounds, through which, in a moment, every man and officer, knowing his place in emergency, went there straight, could not have been inculcated as it was. Habit made me order that bugler to blow the "Assembly" without sending to give notice at Headquarters. The training was indisputably good, but I was wrong in not giving proper notice, so expressed my regret, and my apology was accepted.

#### THE COMMANDING OFFICER'S PARADES.

It very soon became apparent to me, on taking command of my regiment, that no efficient training could possibly be carried on under the then existing circumstances. The adjutant drilled a handful of men at 6 or 7 o'clock in the morning. The commanding officer, when 10 or 10-30 morning parade came, found himself with even less. More than half of the regiment, both officers and men, were not there from some reason or the other. I therefore made it a standing order of the regiment that the colonel should have two parades a week, at which *every* available man and officer (sick in hospital, provost prisoners, and garrison duties alone excepted) should be present. Even the regimental guards (one sentry alone excepted) were on these parades. Then the battalion could be instructed, but not when more than half the officers and men were absent each day on some excuse. This order held good during all the years of my command, and I hope does so still.

The Authorities should not forget that the first duty to be performed in peace time is the training of troops for war, and neither garrison guards nor fatigues should be allowed to interfere with it. Regimental training should be considered first, garrison duties afterwards, and the Horse Guards, War Office, should see this strictly carried out in practice all through the kingdom.

In every week Tuesday and Wednesday were set apart by me for my parades, but though two days were in orders as being given up to this instruction, after the scheme was once fairly set going, if Tuesday was suitable, and a good parade obtained, it was not often found necessary to have the men out on the Wednesday also. Once a month or so there was a "surprise" parade; no warning whatever was given. If the weather was *bad or indifferent*, and it came into my head, I simply ordered the bugler on duty to sound the assembly with the additional three G's, which indicated "Cloak with belts over." In twenty minutes, as a rule, every man and officer, and the mounted officers' horses, were on parade. Ten minutes later twenty rounds of blank ammunition had been issued to them, and away we marched out of barracks to the open country. These parades were on all fours with my Tuesday and Wednesday parades; from these no man was exempted.

Frequently we were not back there till 3 or 4 in the afternoon, the men all this time without dinner. Still oftener we marched away with our signalmen, lamps, and flags, practising day and night out-lying picquets, or a night attack. On these occasions it was often long after dark before the troops got home to their quarters. The battalion was seldom taken out on fine days or dry nights (that would have been a picnic, which our sturdy Highlanders looked on with contempt). If we got through our work well, when the day was bad and the night dark, then we knew it could easily be done in fine weather. Good training indeed it was, if unusual, and proud of it were the smart young fellows of the 91st, who delighted to following—even on the cold snowy nights of winter—their young colonel out into the wet and the darkness.

In the whole course of my command few officers and only one private raised any objection to these proceedings—and they were subalterns of strange regiments attached, or very old captains unaccustomed to this rough way of soldiering. The one private was a recruit from a Yorkshire Militia corps. On the occasions of these parades the officers wore blue patrol jackets, the men being dressed in red fatigue uniforms, so that if a mistake was made by the former it could be easily detected and put right. No regiment could possibly follow its leader better on all occasions than the 91st. An anecdote was told me by a non-commissioned officer (Corporal Campbell) whom I one day met in the International Exhibition at Glasgow, years after I had left the Army. He was delighted to see me after so long an absence—had thought I was dead—and the old time came



back to his mind. Amongst other things, he said, "General, do you remember that day at the Curragh when we out-manceuvred the Guards?" The two regiments were marching home in fours, side by side, chaffing each other, when one of our men, in reply to a sneering remark of the Grenadiers, called out, "We would follow our Colonel to H—l if he asked us, for we know d—d well he would bring us safe out of it." The well-known words of Sir Charles Napier, as given in his history when he conquered the Sikhs in the Punjaub, even now often recurs to me, "He leads well, I wish to God they would follow as well."

Indeed they followed me well, and for this I have greatly to thank my adjutant and all my officers, than whom a more zealous and active set could, I feel sure, be found nowhere. The rank and file gave extremely little trouble, and I was continually being spoken to by Inspecting-Generals on the leniency of my punishments; more severe punishment was quite unnecessary.

It is better to tell young soldiers what they should do, than to punish them for not doing it.

#### MY PERSONAL RECRUITING EXPERIENCE.

Very few officers of the Army have had as much experience and given as much thought to recruiting as I myself, both before and after writing a long and carefully-considered essay for the Gold Medal of the United Service Institution on the subject in 1874. (Appendix I.)

Four years in command of the depot, 83rd County Dublin Regiment (between 1861 and 1865), seven years colonel commanding 91st Argyllshire Highlanders (1869 to 1876), indirectly connected with recruiting while Assistant Adjutant-General and Assistant Quartermaster-General for Scotland, commanded the 31st and 46th Brigade depots (1876 to 1882). Also, there were few who had as great a knowledge of the ways and interior economy of the Militia and Volunteers of the United Kingdom—*vide* extracts from *The Military Record* (Glasgow, March 12th, 1879), *New York Army and Navy Journal* (August 16th, 1879), *Volunteer Service Gazette* (September 6th, 1879), and *The Daily Telegraph* (November 23rd, 1880). Appendix II.

In all these years I have held but one opinion, and with all this experience I hold exactly the same views on the subject now that I did when my essay was first published in 1874.

In all my experience I have never seen anything to lead me to believe that there ever was, "truly, and really," any difficulty in

getting recruits "when they were wanted." What I wrote then was as follows:—

**"Conclusion to First Part" (of Essay).**

"The reports of the Inspector-General do not lead us to believe that there has as yet been, or that there is likely to be, any great difficulty in procuring candidates for the Army. This opinion is borne out by a reference to Table 10 of the Annual Return of the British Army, published in March last (1874).

"In examining the years from 1861 to 1873, it will be perceived that, whatever the establishment has been, the number of effectives have as a rule been very considerably under it. From this it may be inferred either that the Army has systematically been kept below its strength (which would benefit the Treasury), or that this arises from some cause inherent in the manner of recruiting (which I cannot explain) rather than the absence of recruits.

"By Table 17 it appears that when the Army was suddenly augmented by 10,000 men, the number of recruits that joined their corps rose from a yearly average of 14,000 (taken over the previous nine years) to 24,590 in 1870, and 23,500 in 1871, showing that when recruits were really wanted they were forthcoming to the extent of three-quarters more (75 per cent.) than the normal number annually obtained, notwithstanding that the bounty usually given was in these years for the first time discontinued.

"There is a very general impression that the stamp of recruits lately obtained is of an inferior quality, but the Inspector-General for Recruiting has stated that this is not the case, though their ages are somewhat lower than formerly, which may account for the mistaken impression.

"The abstract to Table 42 shows there were more men per 1000 over 5 ft. 7 in. in 1873 than in 1866.

"The Army for the past year (1874) has been as fully supplied with men as could be desired; and although, in some places, there seems a difficulty in enlisting the full proportion for long service, there was none for short.

"Under these circumstances we can hardly suppose that it will be necessary to make any great effort to provide recruits, especially if the suggestions I have made in the foregoing pages be adopted."

There will naturally always be a deficiency where no regiment in the Army is permitted ever to enlist *over* its establishment, because from deaths, desertion, discharge, and other reasons vacancies are continually occurring, which cannot, of course, be

filled up on the instant, or on the following day or week. But, when permission was given for regiments to enlist a little over their establishment when desirable recruits offered during the period round about 1874, the Army was, on an average, quite, or nearly quite, up to its full establishment.

The foregoing has reference to enlisting and training of the British Army *generally*. A method of providing for the Indian Army is suggested at page 42 of the Essay, Appendix I., which, though written nearly thirty years ago, appears still quite satisfactory at the present day (1907).

I have examined carefully the "Annual *Report* (no longer Annual Return) of the British Army" for year ending 1905, published this year (1907), and find nothing in it to lead me to alter my opinion. It leans towards long service of at least nine years, and is somewhat weak throughout.

Now, if my views are correct, is it not strange that the general opinion, as expressed in the public press, should be so different? That can only be accounted for in this way. Others have neither had the experience nor the opportunity that I have had to gain this knowledge, or their desires out-balanced their judgment; in a word, "the wish was father to the thought." Who amongst the officers were familiar with the tables of statistics as set forth in the "Annual Returns of the British Army"? How many pressmen have had a thorough knowledge of this annual periodical, and how many have made use of it? and compared those tables as I did when in search of knowledge on these subjects while writing my essay?

Then there are the feelings and the prejudices of the officers and non-commissioned officers to contend with. All were opposed to the acts and changes made by the Secretary of State for War and his colleagues to the regular routine work they had long been accustomed to, when short service and reserves were introduced.

Wherefrom, and how, do the pressmen and others gain the knowledge from which their opinions and proposals are formed? It is from the ante-room talk of the officers, or a chat at the Sergeants' Mess, where those opinions are reiterated. Or, very likely, from the officers of the Military Clubs, where the identical same opinion naturally exists—picked up one from another, but without sufficient knowledge.

I will relate an anecdote that happened while I was in command of a regiment in those days. It was my habit then to dine at mess pretty regularly on guest nights once a-week. On one occasion, there sat opposite me one of my old lieutenants

and his friend. During the evening I heard them talking on the ever interesting subject of "the difficulty of obtaining recruits," and, in reply to his friend's question as to whether it was true, I heard my officer say, "Oh! yes, they are not to be got; we are very short—a mere skeleton. If you would care to come up at 10 to-morrow morning, when we have our parade, you will see for yourself the deplorable state we are in." Next morning the parade was formed, and the friend put in an appearance. Standing by me at the saluting flag, there he saw before him the "mere skeleton" of what there should have been of a splendid Highland regiment of 650 strong (establishment). There were three or four companies on parade, each might have had eight or ten file; possibly there may have been 100 men altogether on parade, and the young man was quite convinced of the sad state of that corps. What he wrote, or what he said to his friends or the newspapers after he left I know not, but this I know, that on that morning we were 50 over our proper establishment. The others were accounted for in the Parade State as "on detachment," "at musketry," "at recruits' drill," "servants of officers," "sick in hospital," "prisoners," &c., &c., &c.

This story is quite a fair example of how little the average officer sometimes knew of the interior economy of his own regiment in those days (in 1874), and there is probably not much difference now (in 1907).

The feeling and prejudices of officers were more or less as follows:—They did not like to be bothered with recruits, or their training, but they still less liked the idea of taking recruits that had been trained elsewhere, even at their own depots. They disliked immensely the short service (1870-75) of five years on this account, and they worked heaven and earth until this excellent order was rescinded and the five years altered back to eight or nine. The general opinion was that short service hampered recruiting; if the tables aforementioned had been consulted they would have shown beyond all question "it was much easier to enlist men for short service than for long." Many prophesied at that time that, if the Reserves were called out, few men would be found to come forward and rejoin. But when the "Peace with honour" came in 1880, 2 per cent. only of the whole reservists in the United Kingdom were absent from every or any cause. I am sorry to think hard things of the feelings and prejudices of my old comrades and brother officers of those days—it was not their fault, it was their teaching. Had we then, as some desired,

reduced our short service still more, viz., to two years, we should not have required the reforms in the Army that are now (1907) rightly called for.

There is a feeling among many in favour of conscription, because they believe they will get not only more but finer and more generally useful men, better non-commissioned officers, and better servants. But conscription is quite unnecessary in the first place, and, moreover, would never be tolerated by the British nation in the second.

The cry for higher and higher pay we hear everywhere; it arises, no doubt, from a fellow-feeling among us all. As for high pay, soldiers themselves never proposed such a thing; they do not require it, and do not expect it. The granting of it recently was a weak and injudicious proceeding. To aid in recruiting, it will have no effect whatever. Everything they require is provided for the soldiers. To pay them highly is to encourage drunkenness.

A general opinion prevails, that, by raising the daily pay, the age and class of recruits thereby attracted to the Army will be all that is desired, or, at least, better than they have been.

Though I should much wish to see the wages of the soldier increased in some manner, still the proposition of adding to the daily pay must be approached with caution.

Is it likely that the country will readily increase the pay sufficiently to induce men between twenty and twenty-five years of age to leave the occupations they have followed from boyhood, and in which, if intelligent, well-behaved, and strong, they are probably rising, in order to join the service?

And suppose the increase of pay fails to improve our ranks to the extent that may be desired, can it, without danger, when once given, ever again be reduced or cancelled?

It is said that by raising the pay, until we induce a sufficiency of men of from twenty to twenty-five years to enter the service, we shall be saved the expense of keeping a proportion of very young soldiers. But even should this be the case, which is doubtful, it seems a question whether it would not be cheaper—certainly better—to keep up a continual flow of young men in addition to the necessary strength of our Army than to raise the pay of the whole by a large amount; for it should not be forgotten that 6d. a-day (only 3s. 6d. a-week) to the soldier represents, with our Regular Army of 211,000 men (not including those in India), nearly two millions sterling; and as it is probable that a similar increase would be given to the Militia, a total sum of nearly two and a-half millions per annum would be required.



GIBRALTAR—TOWN RANGE—MAJOR SPROT'S  
QUARTERS.  
1867.



GIBRALTAR—PART OF TOWN (from Top of Casemates).  
1867.



## Chapter IV.

### WE ARE MOVED TO SHEFFIELD.

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WE remained at Aldershot all through that drill season, and at the end of it, Headquarters were sent to Sheffield, with a strong detachment at Weedon, a splendid quarter, our fellows told us, for hunting. Personally, I found Sheffield a most excellent place to be quartered, and I had from it the best season's hunting I ever enjoyed, managed as I managed it.

Along with us were the 15th Hussars in the same barracks, one mess and the officers' quarters on one side the entrance gate and archway, and one on the other. They were very pretty barracks, nicely situated on a rise, well out of the town, and as far as possible out of the smoke.

### THE FLOOD.

The week before we arrived a terrible catastrophe befell part of the town, with great pecuniary loss and some considerable loss of life. The bank of the new reservoir burst, and the torrent swept down the centre of the town, carrying away no end of houses, flooding and destroying much valuable property.

### HOW I MANAGED MY HUNTING.

I had with me at Sheffield my smart green dogcart, my two little horses, "Marigold" and the black horse bred by my father. We drove about the district in the summer—Chatsworth, Bakewell, &c., &c.—and many other places at considerable distances, putting up for an hour or so, and then returning after tea. When winter came the officers of the 15th Hussars sent their horses with a soldier groom each to Retford, and hunted with Lord Galway's foxhounds. They could not reach any others, and went to the meets by rail, finding their grooms and their horses at a station near the meet. But this was not a very good way of managing, for if by chance, as was continually happening, a court-martial (of which there were a great many) or other



garrison duty came in the way, then that day's hunting was entirely lost. Moreover, an officer following this plan scarcely ever saw his horses, and he never could tell what sort of tricks were played by his groom on these occasions. Once at the Curragh I left my horse in this way while on a fortnight's leave in Yorkshire, and, when I got back, found him with a broken fetlock; my groom—a civilian—had had him at Newbridge Fair, where he entered into a jumping competition with his fellow-grooms, with this result. So, putting two and two together, and being quite sure I would enjoy my horses much more if I could sit on the corn-bin each morning after breakfast and look at their tails, as well as take them out exercising myself occasionally, I determined upon keeping them in barracks, and proceeded as follows:—

On Saturday evenings I took from the local newspaper the meets of the three or four packs of hounds in the neighbourhood which could be reached by rail conveniently, and tabulated them all on a large sheet of foolscap. If, then, owing to a court-martial or other duty, I was on one day unable to hunt in one place, then I could on the following day go to hunt in another with one of the packs on my sheet of paper.

The result of this was that I had no difficulty whatever in hunting three days a-week, or, to put it in another way, getting three days a-fortnight out of each of my two little horses. In addition, I had all the pleasure of keeping my "tits" under my own eye.

#### TINCTURE OF CALENDULA—ITS USE.

A few pages back I mentioned an accident having happened to my chestnut horse "Marigold" at the Curragh. I found, when I returned to the camp after a fortnight's leave, he was so lame on his off fore leg that he could not even allow it to touch the ground. The fetlock and foot was tremendously swollen, and, though it had been continually fomented both with hot and cold water, and he had been standing three weeks in the stables, the swelling had never gone down in the least, and while in this state, though I really think every veterinary surgeon at the Curragh and Newbridge, or nearly so, had examined the foot, none of them was able to say quite clearly what was wrong.

One day, however, I met at mess a stranger, with whom I conversed on the subject. He said, "Did you ever try tincture of calendula, a homœopathic medicine? It has a most wonderful power of reducing swelling, and if, the next time you are in

Dublin, you go to Harvey's in Bachelors Walk, and get a bottle with instructions, I think with it you will reduce the swelling at once." To Dublin I went the very next day, and came home to my quarters with a large quart bottle of the mixture in my pocket. That very night, according to directions, a bandage was saturated with the stuff and wrapped round the chestnut's leg. Next morning, to our astonishment, the swelling was practically gone. Then, on examination, it was found clearly that the bone between the foot and the fetlock joint was split in a wedge-like fracture. With very great difficulty, after unsuccessfully treating the horse for a month or two, he was got over by rail and sea to Riddell, and ultimately turned out to grass on "the main ocean" fields there. Eighteen months elapsed before he was even fairly sound, and then with a much enlarged joint. When I rode him he tripped so badly that I thought it better to sell him for harness work, especially as at that time my Regiment was ordered to the Mediterranean. The good old horse did his work, I was told, for many years admirably well, and ultimately died of old age at Kelso, never having left the possession of the gentleman to whom I had originally sold him.

Messrs Harvey & Co. are still carrying on business in Dublin, and I am regularly dealing with them now. They have, indeed, with their horse medicines, been a blessing to me, and a still greater blessing to my horses, of which, since I left the service a quarter of a century ago, I have always kept in my stables a baker's dozen at least.

As I am sure that many of my readers will be greatly benefited by it, I cannot do better than give a short account of these horse medicines, and what they have done for me and mine.

Messrs Harvey & Co.'s offices are now at 49 Lower Gardiner Street, Dublin, and they have published a most useful little handy book, giving a list of the drugs, their uses, and how to apply them, which they will send on application, free, to anyone writing.

### **A FEW OF THE REMEDIES I HAVE FOUND MOST USEFUL.**

1. With "Harvey's Embrocation," which I have used for curbs and other bony growths, I have perfectly cured several horses with one application only. The stuff seems slowly to absorb the false bone, without affecting the true bone. For a little the horse seems lamer than ever, and the lameness gets better so slowly that I have often been tired of asking my groom how the horse

is. That, however, is of no matter, because the horse is (or certainly should be) kept moderately at work. One fine day one is astonished to find him sound. It acts equally as well on an old horse, or old lameness, as on a young one.

2. "Harvey's Aconite Powders" come next in usefulness, to my mind. A few years ago I administered them to a middle-aged Clydesdale cart-horse, which had the worst "nasal gleet" I ever saw or heard of. After the veterinary surgeon had abandoned him as incurable, and ordered him to be shot, I took him in hand. He worked for five years perfectly well, but was never quite cured.

A handsome black mare charger (one bred by my father) went broken-winded, and had a continual cough. The veterinary surgeon gave her up, and ordered her also to be shot. In a few weeks I cured her absolutely, and drove her for many years. I am never without these powders as well as the embrocation. Also, I may add here that, since the Mutiny in India, I have never been without pots of Holloway's Ointment in the stables, the nursery, and my own cupboard. The stuff is invaluable for every sore or wound—sore backs, broken knees, and the like are cured rapidly and nicely by it. "Harvey's Worm and Condition Powders" and "Hair Restoring Ointment" I have also used quite successfully.

All his medicines are to be strongly recommended.

Calendula is also made up into an ointment known as "Calendula Cerate"; it has a wonderful effect in making the skin grow. If put on a cut or scratch at bed-time, it will be skinned over by next morning. I am never without it in my family medicine cupboard, though I use it rather weaker than it is usually sold. All homœopathic chemists keep it.

### THE DAILY ROUTINE

Of the Sheffield garrison town was just like that of all other garrison towns. A useless (or nearly so) morning parade—a walk in the country or town in the afternoon—then dinner—the newspapers—and to bed. But during the election times there was some little excitement.

### THE ROTHERHAM ELECTIONS.

It was one day in 1865, when the colonel was away for a short time on leave, that I found myself—I then being a very senior captain—in command at Headquarters of not only my own 83rd Regiment, but also of the garrison. About mid-day

a gentleman came to the mess and asked to see the commanding officer. He stated to me that the Rotherham Election polling would take place on the morrow, and, as there was every possibility of a riot, he would be glad to have troops sent over there early, and would like a squadron of the Hussars. "There is nothing like leather," as the cobbler said, and so I pointed out to him, what is perfectly true, that a company of Infantry, though not, perhaps, quite as showy to look at, would be better to act than Cavalry on the occasion, as the horses in that case frequently injured the people and made them angry, and legal prosecutions occurred. My argument was not effective, and the squadron of Cavalry went.

### NOW COMES THE SEQUEL.

The day passed on, and nothing was heard of the election until just as we were going to mess, when a telegram reached me to say, "Cavalry driven into inn yard, send more troops." I cannot tell you how much pleasure this announcement gave me. "Now we will see what the Infantry can do at elections when properly handled," I exultantly said. "Fall-in No. 5 Company" (that was my company), "make it up to 100 men, and do it quickly." Going into the mess ante-room, it being just dinner-time, I said, "Who will give up their dinner to come with me to quell a riot at Rotherham? A special train is waiting for us at the station." All the young fellows of the 83rd held out their hands, so selecting two smart subalterns, I packed them off to change their uniform, and come on parade. In twenty minutes we were all ready with ten rounds of ball ammunition each in the pouches, and off we went to the station, where in a very few minutes we were all embarked on "the special" steaming off to the scene of the rioting.

On reaching Rotherham Station the train drew up far down the platform on a siding, and when I got out (the men keeping their seats), two gentlemen, apparently of some importance, came up to me. They were not the executive, they said, but were indirectly connected with it. The Magistrates were sitting at the Crown Hotel, but they were shut up, and so were the Cavalry in the inn yard. When I asked them to be kind enough to show me the way they led me to the station door, and when they were further requested to lead on their reply was, "Certainly not, sir, they (the mob) will break our heads, and if you try to get there, yours will be broken too." It was dark, there was no one to tell me the state of affairs, and, until I found the Magistrates

and heard what they had to say, I would not move my troops. It was not the first election trouble I had been in. More than once I had ridden over to Hawick on my little Shetland pony, when a small boy, with my father on these occasions, and been in the thick of it. I would rely on my own tact; these rough fellows are not as bad as people think. "The devil's never so black as he's painted." So tucking my sword under my arm out I went into the dim lamplight, in as unobtrusive a manner as possible; following as far as I was able the directions that had been given me regarding the streets I had to go through, when a sharp quick-eyed little fellow caught sight of the colour of my regimental facings. Looking straight at me, he flourished a handful of placards in the air and shouted, "'Ere he is; hurrah for the yellor." In a moment the idea struck me, "Now's my time to improve the shining hour," so walking quickly up to the man before he had half recovered his astonishment, I seized him by the arm, turned him round, and said, "Now, quickly, take me to the Crown Hotel where the Magistrates are sitting, and here's a shilling for you." Quicker than it takes me to tell the story he walked off in front, and in five minutes more I was inside the inn.

My business there, in my bright red uniform, needed no explanation. The waiter was sent off for the Cavalry captain commanding, while I was put into a little room some steps lower than the passage floor.

On the captain coming in and the door being shut, I asked him to explain what had happened. They had been driven in by the people in the market place, but the Riot Act had not been read, and they were simply forced back into the inn yard. That was about all he could tell me. Then I sent for the head police constable, and asked him to tell me all he knew.

His story was this. There was a good deal of shouting and yelling (as usual), and some small boys in the market place were very rude, noisy, and mischievous. A policeman went to interfere, and, in doing so, cracked two of their heads together; the boys turned on the police, the bigger people backed up the little boys, then the cry was raised "Down with the blue" (the conservative colour), and the shindy ended by the mob driving the blue-coated Hussars into the inn yard along with the blue-coated Police.

#### HOW I ACTED.

Now I knew what to do. All the Cavalry still out must be drawn in, so also must all blue-coated policemen—not one of

them must be left outside—"But, Mr Constable," I said, "send out all the plain clothes men you have, and let me hear every quarter of an hour what is going on outside." That was done, and done well.

### **I MUST NOW SEE THE MAGISTRATES.**

Turning to the head constable, I asked him to go to the Magistrates, who were "sitting" upstairs, and say, "I was here with more troops, and would be glad to see them, if convenient." One of them came down to interview me. He was very excited. "Now, sir," he called out, "you must take action at once, or they will pull down the houses. Where are your troops?" My quiet reply was, "They are close at hand; but until I had made myself acquainted with all that has happened, I could do nothing. I have now done that, though, before any step is taken, I must know who is to be held responsible; if the Magistrates are, I will do as they tell me; if I am, I will do what I believe to be best."

The gentleman was puzzled, but went upstairs to consult his colleagues; when he came down, I was told "They would not hold themselves responsible. I might do as I chose as I was obstinate, and they would report my conduct to the commander-in-chief in the morning." This being settled, I repeated my orders to both Cavalry and Police that they must keep "the blue" out of sight. The rioters were fighting with "the blue," nothing else. If I kept away "the blue" coats there was nothing for them to fight with. They cheered me a few minutes before because I had a yellow collar to my coat.

### **RESULTS PROVED I WAS RIGHT.**

After having had a bit of supper (for we had had no dinner), I went back to the yard, had a talk with the captain of the Hussars and the head policeman, told them my views and my wishes, and went back to the station to take charge of the men till my two subalterns had had something to eat. By that time the noise was subsiding, and not long after (11 P.M.) I heard Cavalry passing down the road. "Why are you moving your troops without orders from me?" "The people, sir, have all gone to bed; the town is quite deserted and quiet, and the Magistrates told us we were no longer required, and we might go home." So in half-an-hour more the Infantry went home too. And that was the end of the riots. No harm was done to anybody or anybody's property. "Hurrah for the yellow!"

I thought the Magistrates were a little disappointed; they had expected to see force used, a small battle in fact, and were not very pleased with me for taking the whole thing into my own hands, but I always preferred to use "skill" rather than "brute force," and if they were not satisfied with the way I had acted, I was myself perfectly sure I had done the right thing in the right way at the right time, and was proud of it. There had, about this time, been several cases of injury to the people at similar riots, especially in Ireland, where, in several cases, the officers had been tried in civil Courts on a charge of "manslaughter," or something of the sort.

### MY SECOND TRIP TO NORWAY.

From Sheffield, together with my dear old friend "Bill Stewart" of the 15th Hussars, I went on an expedition to Norway. We embarked from Hull, went over to Bergen, our object being salmon and trout fishing.

We got over quite easily in the steamer, leaving Hull on Saturday and were at Bergen on Monday morning, where we stayed for a few days. Then having ascertained there might be got some good trout fishing in a loch in one of the islands a little north, we started off in a small sailing boat which we hired, and in the course of the day were landed on the island, and walked up to the loch, at the end of which was a farmhouse, wherein we ultimately spent the night.

First, we came to a little wooden pier where our guide and interpreter had engaged a boat to fish in, and away we went pulling round the lake fishing in the most artistic way under the bushes that overhung the rocks and wherever we thought a trout would be tempted to rise at our flies. Those on my line amounted to no less than six, which I found was always, or, at least, was usually the most successful number out there. We spent more than an hour over this delectable amusement, but all to no purpose, not a rise could either of us get.

We therefore determined to row up to the farm and inspect our quarters for the night, and wait till a "take" came on.

My companion was not so keen on fishing as I was, and so, after more than an hour's relaxation, I started again by myself. It is curious one always succeeds best on these expeditions when alone, and this time was no exception to the rule.

It struck me just after I had started that it would be well to try some other method of fishing, and see what effect that would have. So, instead of flogging the water, I determined to put on an

old glass minnow that happened, with another of the same sort, to be in one of the pockets of my old Riddell Ale Water fishing-book, and to run out as long a line as possible—as both water and sky were bright and clear—and to trail it along after the boat. In a very few minutes my experiment proved most successful. My bait had not been out three minutes when a large trout rolled over and took it. I wound him up, popped the landing net under him, and he was soon lying at the bottom of the boat. The hooks were then taken from his mouth, and the experiment repeated. Even in less time than before another of equal size with the first had the bait, and it in like manner was landed and deposited in the boat's bottom.

"This is fun," I said to my Norwegian companion, "hand me up the gentleman's rod," and in a very few minutes I had Bill's rod and line rigged up with the other minnow. Putting one rod at each side with the butts stuck under the seat, I had nothing to do but to haul the big trout out of the water, one after the other, until, having completed the circuit of the lake, I came back to the little wooden pier with 48 fine fish, each weighing from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 lbs. There's nothing like a glass minnow in Norwegian lakes at the end of a very long line.

On the pier I found my friend waiting for me, so we walked up together to the farm-house at the end of the lake, where we spent a not very comfortable night, returning next morning to Bergen.

### A REMARKABLE CORNICE.

At the hotel where we stopped there was in the public room a remarkable cornice under the ceiling. Two large flower pots stood in opposite corners, with ivy plants growing in them; these were trained up the corners to the ceiling, and then round it on suitable arrangements for the purpose. I cannot say I admired it—the ivy did not seem flourishing, and was decidedly dusty.

### BROWN TROUT FISHING.

After a day or two spent doing little or nothing in company with a very good fellow, a native of Bergen, Herr Brown, we started across country in carioles for Lillehammer, and *en route* got some excellent trout fishing in all the small streams we passed, where we changed horses. The horses or dun ponies were not kept in the stables, but roamed freely over the veldt, and, while they were being caught and brought in, an hour or so



usually elapsed, during which time I put up my little travelling rod, which was always carried with me, and which I still have at Riddell, and commenced fishing, getting on an average three or four dozen nice trout each halt, varying from a half to three to the pound.

At Lillehammer we took steamer down the Mjosen Lake, and at the end of it found the railway with a train in waiting to carry the passengers on to Christiania.

### AT CHRISTIANIA

We spent a few days going to concerts and theatres, and seeing palaces and other sights, and then took steamer for Gothenburg.

### AT GOTHENBURG

We remained a week amusing ourselves pretty much in the same way we had done at the other places, and then it was agreed between us that Major Stewart would go by boat up the Trollhatton Canal to Stockholm, and that I would go by the more humble rail with our interpreter. We met again at our hotel, and, on the following morning, went off to present our letters of introduction. Sweden being famous for steel as well as Sheffield, before leaving that garrison town I thought I would look up some of my manufacturing friends and see if I could not make them useful to me by getting letters of introduction to friends of theirs in the principal Swedish and Norwegian towns, and they very kindly gave me several.

I cannot now remember the name of our Stockholm acquaintance, but, like Mr Brown of Bergen, he was a very pleasant fellow, and did a great deal for our amusement. He showed us all over the islands, the parks and gardens, the little steamers that take people from island to island, and then to the summer palace of the King, where we lunched and dined, and played billiards. This gentleman was a most liberal-minded man; he insisted treating us as his guests, and paid for everything, ending by inviting us to his own home, where he gave us

### A SWEDISH DINNER PARTY,

And a very remarkable dinner it was. It resembled a stand up supper. On the round table, which was spread with a clean white cloth, was placed, first, the soup, then the fish, and so on with piles of hot and cold plates, &c., &c. The guests walked up and down the room at pleasure, gentlemen helping the ladies

and then themselves, and rested the plates on the side tables, piano, &c., or ate off their knees. The host explained the reason that, while at a stiff English dinner party we sat for an hour or more between the same two people, at a Swedish entertainment we could move freely about, and, so to speak, change partners. Another possible reason might have been to save having waiters? After this we took leave of our hospitable host and hostess, returned to Malmo, and crossed over by steamer to

### **COPENHAGEN.**

Here we stayed a few days, going over the palace and seeing all the sights that were to be seen, and there also I bought a few small curiosities, &c.

I do not remember the name of our hotel, but there we met a German staff officer of the Berlin Staff, who was, on behalf of the State, examining into the effect of the breech-loading fire, the military breech loaders (needle gun) being used during the Dano-German War for the first time near here. We joined company with him, and went over the theatre of the exploits, where single companies of German Infantry, with these new-fangled rifles had driven whole battalions out of the field. In this manner we worked our way on through Denmark until we reached

### **HAMBURG.**

On arriving there we immediately made enquiry regarding a steamer for Hull, and were very put out to find that it would be some days before any sailed, and that consequently we could, by no manner of means, reach Sheffield in time for muster on the last day of the month, when our leave expired. However, there we were, and nothing could be done, so we whiled away the few days of compulsory unproductive leisure in sight-seeing, and one expedition which we made in a penny boat was to Heligoland and back, going carefully over the fortress there. It was well on on the first of the month before we reached our barracks at Sheffield, where we fully expected to be placed under arrest, or, at least, receive a reprimand, if nothing more serious, but to our great joy we found that both the commanding officers of cavalry and of infantry had gone on leave, without giving any instructions for our disposal, so we each considered our fault favourably, and assumed, without further ado, the command of our respective headquarters.

**HOW I WAS ONCE DEPRIVED OF THREE DAYS' PAY.**

This reminds me of an incident which took place about a year later, which was somewhat similar. It was while I was quartered at Boyle, in the north-west of Ireland, and in command of four companies there. Such a thing probably never occurred to any living officer before or since. It was towards the end of the racing season, in which in those days I took considerable interest, first, because horses and race riding was always a pastime in which I frequently engaged, and most successfully too; and, secondly, because (in a small way) I increased my income slightly by now and again having a few pounds on the winner, so I thought I would like to go over to Doncaster and see the Cæsarewitch run for, and applied for and obtained ten days' leave of absence to go over to England. My headquarters were at my little lodgings in town, where I usually went, and then on the day of the race I ran down to see it pulled off in one of the numerous excursion trains which leave King's Cross. The day was lovely, everything was delightful, the race was run and won, and I put as many yellow sovereigns into my pocket as would pay for my outing. When the time came for the return of my excursion train, down to the station I went, but the crowd was intense. The trains were all much delayed, and the whole thing ended in my reaching London too late to catch the Irish mail, which steamed out of the station just as we went into it. "There goes my usual luck again, just what happened a year before at Hamburg," I said. "Well, I am the commanding officer this time; I shall not be at muster it is true, but I will take care and wire that the returns must not go in until I arrive in the afternoon to sign them, and that will do."

All through my service I was pretty popular with my brother officers, and, when in command of the 91st Highlanders, used to go by the name of "The popular Colonel," but, popular or not, we have always some enemies, and I suppose in some way I had at least one, for though there was nothing whatever to show that I had most excusably missed the muster parade in the morning, I was there in the afternoon to see that everything was correct, and to make myself responsible. However, the colonel commanding at headquarters found out in some way what had happened, and ordered the adjutant (the same one, I think, who went against my interpretership at Nusserabad, as described at page 54, Vol. I.) to write and ask me direct, "Did I, or did I not, miss muster parade?" Of course, I acknowledged exactly

what had happened, and put in my defence at the same time, but that was not accepted. My letter was sent to the Horse Guards, with one from the colonel, and the order came that "Captain Sprot, 83rd Regiment, will be deprived of three days' pay," and that was carried out by the Dublin banker, through whom my pay came, as also did that of the other officers of regiments quartered in the Emerald Isle. I don't think my commanding officer would have done this unless he had had some intense and unwarrantable dislike to me. But, "*De mortuis nil nisi bonum.*"



## Chapter V.

### ORDERED TO IRELAND.

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IT was now nearing our time to change quarters, and as the Fenian disturbances were making headway in Ireland, we were ordered to the Curragh Camp. One of my two little horses—the black one—as it was spring time, I sent back to my father, who always was very kind to me, and gave him a run at grass in one of his rough fields at Riddell. This I considered much better for a hunter than that detestable lazy plan many head grooms are so fond of, of putting them into a loose box or straw yard during the summer off season. Let them go and stretch their legs and ease themselves, poor things; have a gallop when they like, and plenty of fresh open air; a cold night or two does them good, and to be rained upon occasionally is only natural. As to grass—fresh, sweet, green grass—no better thing for them than a change of food from the everlasting hard oats, and dry (sometimes fusty) hay and straw, they are obliged in the hunting season to feed upon. If I had my own way, which, however, our head groom will seldom let us have, I would feed them, as well as I do myself, alternately with oats and Indian corn. The latter is a fine stomachic, very warming in winter, and, above all, has great power of making hard, firm flesh, and plenty of muscle. All the winter I take it as porridge for myself. It keeps me warm, it makes my flesh hard, and, as I said before, it is an excellent stomachic, particularly for those amongst us who are advanced in age. Some may at first object to its peculiar flavour, but after a very short time one rather likes it. Indeed, putting cost aside, I would say, better feed the man and his horse on Indian corn than the pigs and the poultry; let them get the wheat and the oats. It was the Irish famine of 1848 that I was in the middle of that put English people against Indian meal, because the starving poor were then fed upon it as it was cheap. Did my reader ever hear the “riddle” of

that period? "Why is an Irishman's stomach like Egypt?" *Answer*—"Because the Indian meal (mail) runs through it." Poor fellows! many of them never got a mouthful of anything else during that terrible period, and yet what fine young chaps many of them were.

### RECRUITING THEN.

These were halcyon times for the Army. When in early days, my 83rd Regiment got down to Fermoy and Cork, preparatory to embarking for India, and had orders to make up their numbers from under 600 to over 1000, recruiting sergeants were sent out to enlist; they brought men in by dozens and scores at a time every day—fine strapping young fellows from eighteen to twenty-five years of age—into barracks for medical examination and approval, when, out of every batch that went before the doctors, two, or at most three, would be selected, the rest being returned to their starving comrades, not because they were not all eligible, but there were so many fine young men offered, we could afford to select only the very finest. Some 550 or more were attested, and, after two or three years, when these men had grown and filled out, they stood on parade the finest regiment, physically, I have ever seen in all my service. The Inspecting General Officer spoke truly of them, when, after parade at Camp Deesa in 1855 at a General's Inspection, he said, speaking to the regiment on parade, "83rd, your men are the finest and steadiest under arms I have ever seen, and your officers are inferior to none." That was no flattery.

### THE REGIMENT WENT ON DETACHMENT.

After an uneventful stay at the Curragh Camp (except for the breakdown of my favourite hunter Marigold, described at page 40) we were sent north on detachment—Headquarters to Enniskillen. My company, with three others, went to Boyle, I being a very senior Captain, in command.

They were not bad barracks at Boyle, and the officers' quarters were uncommonly good, with a fine flight of steps up to the front door, on which I have stood many a time practising "catching up the lash" of a tandem whip. I had intended to take to tandem driving near the end of our sojourn, and carry it on just as I learnt four-in-hand driving, by taking the four-in-hand omnibus out from Sheffield to Ramore every available morning, lunching there, and returning in the afternoon

with it again. But the tandem driving never got further than "catching up the lash" in a masterly manner, for we were ordered to Dublin, and I never in my life got another opportunity.

This shows how necessary it is to seize your opportunity always, for you never know when you will get another.

At Boyle I was able to get some capital salmon fishing, however, and also good trout fishing on the many surrounding lakes of the Shannon, Boyle standing in the middle of them.

### LAKE FISHING FOR TROUT.

After settling my men and officers into their new home, starting a nice well-managed canteen, on what was then the new principle, under our own management (I had been a year President of the Headquarter Regimental Canteen at Sheffield), I took a look round to see what sport there was to be found, and where we might make a few useful acquaintances, and early got hold of a nice fellow, a thorough-going sportsman (though he occasionally fished with an "otter"), who was barrack-master of the district, and lived at Longford. He was a capital fellow, and we turned excellent friends, but at last he gave up his military office to turn agent for somebody's excellent champagne. He took me round, showed me all the lakes, told me all about them, and introduced me to some of the nice people about. He took me to Lough Gara, and taught me how to fish with an "otter." Poaching, or not poaching, it may be, but all I can say is, that better sport I never enjoyed, and better fun I never had, and I only wish I could have some of it now.

### HOW TO FISH WITH AN "OTTER."

A small piece of planed board of any light wood is rigged out with two strings from its surface on the same principle as a boy's kite. To this is fastened a long, light, strong line—say 50 or 60 yards long; on this line is attached, at perhaps a yard apart, pieces of string, gut, or gimp (if fishing for pike), each say a foot or 15 inches long, which carry the hooks. You may have 30 or 40 or more of these hooks baited as you desire. Gaudy artificial flies made of peacock, jungle cock, or golden pheasant's feathers, or minnows, or lumps of meat, worms, or fish may be used, and in these Shannon lakes you will catch perch mostly, also pike, and trout. The line thus baited is rolled up on a stick or reed (like the lines of "Trimmers") and taken down to the boat. It requires two people to work the machine

—one rows the boat round or across the lake, while the other manages the “otter.” This you start in the water just as you start a boy’s kite in the air; the harder you pull at the kite the farther it goes up in the air, the more you pull at the “otter” the farther out into the lake it goes, carrying with it its long line of hooks. The rower pulls steadily on, and if the fish are taking at all you will soon see large ones laying hold of the bait, and you have nothing to do but every now and again to haul in your line and take your catch off the hooks into the boats. Our principal catch was perch, and fine big fellows they were, not the little flounder-like ones we usually see, but big chaps weighing from a pound to a pound and a-half or more, most juicy and delicious on the table; you would never believe they were the fish you knew as perch, caught by fishing from the side. Besides these, we would haul in sometimes large pike weighing 6 or 8 lbs. each, and occasionally an enormous trout, also of many pounds weight.

The gentlemen with whom we were surrounded were as Irishmen always are—most hospitable. They asked us to dinner and lunch, and to picnics, &c., and gave us as much

### **RABBIT SHOOTING**

As we liked. It was curious how few of my brother officers cared to avail themselves of this, and to come out with me when I went fishing or shooting; only one or two came for the rabbit shooting occasionally.

### **DAPPING WITH THE “MAY FLY.”**

In May I had on Lough Key some capital sport dapping with the “May Fly” as it is called. We fished on these occasions from a boat, using a floss silk line; on the hook we fastened a live “May Fly.” They come out of that funny insect called “Creeper,” and they are found in quantities under the stones at the side of the rivers at that season of the year. We often had capital sport with the trout.

### **SALMON FISHING.**

Later on, when the season arrived, I took to salmon fishing. That is a much grander business than catching those other poor things. I had my old Norwegian bamboo salmon rod with me, 10 feet long, and flies and tackle to match.



At a place about 5 miles from Sligo, where there is a railway station called Ballysadare, runs a river belonging to Captain Cooper, late of the 93rd Highlanders. The river runs into the sea, not far from the railway station, and there he kept a fisherman, and netted, and sold a great number of salmon.

Gentlemen could have a day's fishing any time on this little river by paying the fisherman the small sum of 2s. 6d., and getting a ticket, and though he had to give up what he caught, he was always allowed to retain one fish for his own use. Many were the days I went over and fished at this place, always getting at least one without fail, and sometimes had very good sport. I always fished with a fly. (?)

Readers must remember that in those days very little "training" of troops went on. In time of national war great masses of troops are moved to the strategical point. The corollary was then to bring the greatest possible number of your own troops to bear upon the smallest number of the adversary's—that was all. But, in time of rebellion, the exact opposite is required. Troops must be scattered all over the country ready on the moment to put down their heel on any trifling rising before it got ahead, and therefore we were, during this Fenian Rebellion, sent in small detachments to all fairly large towns where barrack accommodation was to be found, or could in any way be improvised. We had therefore practically nothing to do at Boyle, and what I have been, and am still describing, was the way in which we got rid of "our compulsory unproductive leisure."

I was not neglecting my duty, remember, then, nor idling my time, when three or four times a-week I took the train, the only "down" train, at 7-30 A.M., and went some 20 miles to Ballysadare Station to fish on the little Ballysadare River. When I got there each morning I went to the fisherman's house, paid my half-crown, and set to work. If the river was in good order, and the fish taking, I often had very good sport, killing on my best days as many as ten, weighing 60 lbs. The fish which frequented this river were small, and 6 lbs. a-piece may be taken as an average, though the largest I landed there was 13 lbs. That one I took in a hole under the abutment of the railway bridge.

There was only one afternoon train back to Boyle, which passed the station at 3-20 P.M., far too soon for me to drop my amusement, but at 7-30 there passed a "Biancany" car, which I always got a seat on, and that took me home over the "Curlew" mountains, and put me and my one salmon down at the barrack gate.

### STROKE-HAULING.

No one can, I fancy, acquit my nice friends, the Irish, of being what we English would call "poachers." There is the fishing of the lakes just described with the "otter," and now comes the river fishing for salmon by a method styled "stroke-hauling." I have played that little game, however, more than once myself, for in those days I eased my conscience by quoting the well-known lines, "When in Rome do as Rome does," and very good fun I have had.

Just at the bottom of a small waterfall about 200 yards from the sea, where a salmon ladder had been built, there was a deep hole. Some of the fish went up the ladder no doubt, but from want of water, or want of intelligence, or ignorance on their part of the method of climbing that ingenious channel, or from indecision, or some other reason, a very large number of the fish remained in this hole, until I may say metaphorically, "the pool was just boiling with them." Now, sometimes late in the afternoon, when I had toiled for hours, and yet had a very unlucky day, and though it was nearing the time for putting up the rod, and yet I had not got that "one" fish, only then I would go down to this pool, put on my very largest Norwegian salmon fly, and, having looked round to see that nobody was there, sunk it into the middle of the pool, drawing it quickly along. After two or three trials I was pretty sure to hook a fish in the body somewhere, his tail, back fin, side, or belly, and it did not usually take very long to land him with the help of the portable landing-net.

### HOW I LEARNT FROM EXPERIENCE.

One day I had a great tussle with a ten-pounder, nice, bright, clean, and active fish, just up from the sea. I had hooked him in the shoulder, and thus he had full power over me. If I had had him hooked in the mouth I could have turned his head round by a steady, hard, firm pull, but being thus harnessed he had it all his own way. It had long been my custom to hold my fish tight by the head. I seldom ever gave them any line however large they were, generally taking a twist of the line round my forefinger. It is quite astonishing what a single gut will hold; if the fisherman will simply turn his back on the salmon, put the butt of his rod into his thigh, and let the point bend round, and just simply hold him. I have seen, at this very pool, my rod go through by the middle joint before the gut would break, and

this happened in the case I am now writing about. It was followed by, to me, a remarkable result, which I have frequently taken advantage of since. As soon as the rod broke, and the salmon found, so to speak, that he was "free," down to the bottom of the pool he went like a log, and there he remained as long as he was not disturbed. He thought he was free, but though the rod was broken right through the middle, the line was still intact. Now, what I did was this—while my prey was lying still at the bottom, I laid the point half of the rod on the grass near me, and I ran out all the line off the reel; I untied it from the spindle, and slipped it through the rings on the butt half, again fixed it on the reel, and seeing a boy on the bank above me (in Ireland there is always somebody watching you), I called him down to give me assistance.

All Irishmen are sportsmen from their birth, and it was innate in this little "spalpeen"; down the bank he came, waded across the river up to his knees, and was soon at my side to help me. "Now," I said, "take this reel in your hand, and as fast as I pull in the line you wind it up." Then, taking care to keep my fish from breaking down stream, I manœuvred him with the point end of the rod, and the help of the boy, till at last we got the landing-net under him, and so ended this exciting contest.

#### ANOTHER STRUGGLE.

Once before I had another exciting struggle with a good-sized fish, which I had hooked in the back firmly. He, too, had got the power pretty much in his own hands, and it was not until after my adventure with this one that I had made myself master of the full strength of good single gut. After that day was over and I was in my barracks, I determined to try what single gut could carry, so with rod and line I went to the top of the Boyle Barracks steps, taking also a wooden barrack-chair; I put the hook into the back of the chair, and then carefully and slowly tried to raise the chair. I had looked forward to seeing how long it would be before the gut broke, and to see by that how long, under the circumstances, I could with some certainty hold on to my fish. Carefully I raised the rod; it bent, and bent, and bent till one leg of the chair came off the ground, then two, then three, but the good gut held him still. Well, the fish hooked through the back fin proved himself very game, and not then knowing what I afterwards ascertained, I thought I would give him a little more line. That was fatal, in a moment he

dashed through the small stream that came out of the pool and made off for the sea. There was nothing for it but to give him as much and as slack a line as I possibly could, and run through the rough stony river after him as fast as a large pair of wading boots would let me; thus I managed to prevent a breakage. Very fortunately, whenever I did succeed in giving him quite a loose line he stopped, and in this way the 200 yards to the sea was covered. Into the bay he plunged, and having plenty of line he went straight to the bottom. This time there was no little boy about, but by "halloaing" I got the fisherman, whose cottage was on the cliff above me, to hear my vociferation, and he then came down to my assistance, and quickly got out the boat. Into it we both jumped, and, without any further difficulty, in ten or fifteen minutes I had him at the bottom of it quite exhausted.

### ON RODS.

I have now given my readers a good dose of such salmon fishing as the Ballysdare River afforded, and I will finish with a word upon rods. A very great deal depends on the rod, because you have to throw the flies at the end of your line in such a manner as to cause them to alight gently on the water at the greatest possible distance from the user's feet.

Now there are two sorts of rods, with two quite different manners of casting. The stiff, springy rod (which for Scotland, at least, I personally prefer) where your line is quite under control, and can be cast upwards or sideways, and very little behind you (suitable for streams with many overhanging trees), and the very supple rod which is cast by its own swing. For this you must have an open stream, and thus it is used greatly in the sister island. You let your line go out behind to its full extent, and then, swinging the rod forward, it will carry the line a great distance softly across the waters. The first rod is made usually of "hickory" with "lancewood" points; the second is made of "greenheart."

For large salmon rods I would recommend bamboo—either natural (which is the lightest), or built up as was introduced by Hardy of Alnwick. They are very nice looking, and have become very popular.

### ALL FOR FLY FISHING.

In the rising generation all men seem to have a strong, very strong, predilection for fly fishing, which is a pity, for they

lose some excellent sport altogether, much time being wasted waiting until it pleases God to give us suitable weather for the insects. But my way was to have as many methods of fishing as possible (I never have fished with salmon roe), so that when near a stream I should lose no opportunity, or, at least, as few opportunities as possible, of filling my brown wicker basket.

### THE HUMBLE WORM

Is an excellent institution when used skilfully. It is very little used in Scotland, probably in consequence of the sensitiveness of the people, who have not forgotten that provoking old gentleman's (Dr. Johnson) definition of a rod or a line, where he places "a worm at one end, and a fool at the other."

It requires a little more skill than fly fishing, as the best time for its use is when the river is low, bright, and clear. The angler walks up the middle of the stream, and, in this case, works with a somewhat short line, instead of a very long one. The worm is put on the hook with a sufficiently heavy sinker (split shot is best) a few inches above it. The line is then swung rather than thrown up stream as far as it will go, and gently dropped into the most likely places, and allowed to float or get carried down the stream to the angler's feet, and then thrown again.

Just as it is the best time to fly fish in the middle of the day when the flies come out, from 12 to 2 in early spring, or of an evening in summer, so when worm fishing, begin as soon after daylight as possible, and fish in the cool of the morning, for it is then that the worm goes home to his hole to escape the scorching heat of the sun when it rises, and there are no flies out to divert the attention of the trout.

### MINNOW OR PARR-TAIL FISHING.

A minnow, artificial, or natural, if it can be got, is best, but a slice cut off half of a parr answers the purpose quite well. Artificial minnows of glass are most attractive, but they are hard, and sometimes the trout drop them when they feel that. Phantom minnows, or minnows brightly coloured made of soft rubber do well, as the fish do not then so readily drop them. They must have light sinkers, and are pulled up the stream to make the bait as lifelike as possible, or as it is technically termed "spin."

In salmon fishing with a fly it is well to manipulate the fly

in a somewhat similar manner; at least, I personally think so, and I have been a more than usually successful salmon fisher, often inducing the fish to rise when others, who were less careful, could not manage it.

I mentioned before that I always held my fish tight by the head if I possibly could. For, notice, if you pull tight enough the head *must* come round, and then the salmon is fairly powerless. There is another advantage in thus holding them tight, for, if allowed to run rampant and dash about the pool, there is no doubt whatever it disturbs others, and diminishes your chances of more sport.

### LINE SEA FISHING.

I have had very good line fishing at sea off Dunbar, and quite enjoyed the sport as long as the sea was calm, but the possibility, if not probability, or perhaps certainty of *mal de mer* prevents most people taking to this sort of amusement. Nevertheless, I have often done it, and often much enjoyed it.

In thus fishing and shooting, and in other ways, we whiled away the time until the Fenians, on the approach of winter, became at Dublin very troublesome, and then the whole 83rd Regiment was ordered to Richmond Barracks, and quartered there on the north side of the square, while we had the 21st Royal Scots Fusiliers with us on the south side.



## **Chapter VI.**

### **IN DUBLIN.**

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THE town was full of troops, and the duty was perhaps the hardest I ever saw during my army life. Captains on garrison guards four days a week or more, and mostly other garrison duties on the remaining three, the Castle, the Bank, Mountjoy Prison, and others. At Mountjoy Jail we had 35 privates and non-commissioned officers, with a captain and two subalterns, and they were visited by a field officer once by day, and once by night.

It was winter, and, with the usual shortness of officers during the leave season, I found myself on this guard not much less than five days a fortnight, and had one or two adventures there. The prison was crowded with Fenians.

#### **FENIANS TRY TO TAMPER WITH THE TROOPS.**

There were two jails here—the men's and the women's. They were quite separate, each standing in its own grounds, that is—the two pieces of ground were separated by a very high prison wall.

One night when going my rounds I came to the sentry whose duty kept him at the bottom of this wall, and when I came to him to receive his orders, he reported to me an interview he had just had with a man on the top of this partition wall. He was trying to induce the sentry to desert—to join the Fenians, tempting him with offers of money, and I don't know what besides. The man's story, which I afterwards took down in writing, seemed to me quite simple and true. All was officially reported by me to the Division Headquarters at the Castle, but the authorities said it was, they felt sure, a "hallucination" on the part of the soldier, and so nothing more was done.

## THE CHOLERA.

All this year 1866, both in England and Ireland, there had been about a great deal of cholera, and all through both countries warnings had been given and precautions taken against it.

While at Boyle, where there was a smelly and impure river running close past the barracks, I received notice of the proximity of this dreadful disease. I had had considerable experience of the complaint and its ways, and in all my soldiering was never quartered in a more likely place for it than the Boyle Barracks.

"What precautions are best to take under the circumstances?" I thought. "If it does break out here we shall assuredly have a panic, and what then?" So I sat down and wrote to my London bookseller, requesting him to send me by return of post the best pamphlet he could find on the subject for 1s. 6d. or 2s., that I might quickly make myself "*au fait*." It came very shortly, and I read it with much interest and much care, and, when I had made myself as fully acquainted with the ways of cholera as possible, this is what I did. With the doctor of the detachment I went up on to the side of the Curlew Mountains, and there selected a site for a camp; it was between two clear little sparkling streams. "Here I will have it," I said. "The quarter guard must be here at the upper part, and no soldier must be allowed to go beyond him, so that the water cannot be contaminated above, where the water will be used for drinking, cooking, &c., and washing must be done lower down." From my old friend the barrack-master I found out he had plenty of tents, and so arranged that, in the event of the "unmentionable disease" (the expression made use of by natives of India, as they dare not pronounce even the very name of cholera) appearing, the whole detachment would at once march out into camp. Arrangements also were made for commissariat supplies, and then I could almost have said to the awful complaint, "Come on," only I was afraid. This done, however, I was perfectly happy, and the matter gave me no further anxiety.

As I have said before, when a captain I was often on guard at Mountjoy Prison, and, as usual, one day in the week I and my two subalterns and my 35 rank and file marched off to relieve the old guard. There were first the sentries to post, and then many other little things to see to, and all this time the Governor was standing on the top of the high flight of steps looking very glum, and what struck me most was that he did not come forward as usual to greet me in his cheerful Irish way. When



all were posted, the guard dismissed, and things settled down, I went up to shake hands with him, and said, after the usual "How do you do?"—"What makes you look so glum and remain so silent this morning?" His answer was, "Sir, the Angel of Death is passing over this place." "What do you mean?" I said. He replied again, "Sir, since daylight this morning ten men have been taken to hospital with cholera, and eight of them are dead." "Well, the ways of Almighty God are inscrutable, but"—bearing in mind how desirable in this disease it is to keep up men's spirits—I said, "I do not believe in all Ireland you could have come to a better man than me. I will get you out of your difficulty; I know all about this terrible complaint. I have been for years in the middle of it in India, and will soon put you all straight. Cheer up, and trust to me. Show me where these men get their drinking water." He solemnly took me into the jail, and showed me several little "fountains," as they are called, in the different wards. "Now, these must all—everyone—be closed to everybody at once, and let me see where the water in them comes from." It came by pipes from a cistern in a dark place in the hospital, and over it, alongside of it, and under it were the hospital w.c.'s, &c. "Send for the doctor." He came, and I soon explained to him how much I knew of these things from my long sojourn in the East. "So, sir," I said, "you will excuse me, but, in the meantime, you will please obey me to the letter." And, indeed, they were all ready and only too glad to carry out my instructions without hesitation, when they thought I knew all about it, and they knew nothing at all. He then showed me where the hospital got their water from, against which I could see nothing, so I ordered the large cistern to be disinfected with chloride of lime (as at that time no other disinfectant was known, or understood at least, by the doctors in that hospital).

#### I HAD NOW TO LOOK TO MY OWN MEN.

"Fall-in, the guard." I never saw a guard fall-in so quickly before or so silently. Their "eyes" were neither "right" nor "left"; they were fixed on me as I walked up to them, and said, "Half the guard, from here to the left, put away your arms, take off your belts and tunics, and fall-in again quickly." "Left turn—lodge arms—fall-out." Never forgetting the position we were in—guarding a jail full of Fenians, I kept half the guard standing to their arms during my absence, and, taking the fatigue

men down to the jail cellar, got for each two brand new fire-buckets, then I marched them out across the canal, where a kind lady who had a good well allowed my soldiers to fill their pails. After this we returned with them to the guard-room, and ranged them in two rows along one of the walls. "Now, on with your coats quickly, take your arms, my men, and fall-in again." Nothing more remained to be done, but to explain what had happened, and give strict orders—the very strictest—that no other water was to be used by the soldiers than what they had in the fire-buckets.

This done, I wrote my report of what had occurred, and dispatched a messenger express with it to Headquarters at Dublin Castle.

A few more patients were brought into hospital, but after what had been done the disease subsided.

The general (Lord Strathnairn) sent quickly a water-cart with water for the troops. None of the troops took the complaint, and very few, if any, of the prisoners in the jail were after this affected. Truly, "Knowledge is power."

### **WHEN SHALL I GET MY MAJORITY?**

We had not been very long over in Ireland when we got word to hold ourselves in readiness to proceed on foreign service, our tour of home service having nearly expired. It might be to India again, or it might be to the Cape of Good Hope. We were to enlist up to our full foreign service strength, and make any other arrangements we had to make.

This was not very good news for me. I had promised my old father and mother not to return to the East, and as for the Cape, why, that was almost as much out of the way in those days. As for exchanging to a home regiment, and I senior captain, that was out of the question, for all who exchanged from one regiment went to the bottom of the list of their rank in the other to which they exchanged. But I thought to myself, though I told no one, that it would be just possible for me to obtain leave to go to the Staff College, if only I could manage to pass the entrance examination pretty well, and then I could remain there until it came to my turn for promotion, or very near it. Having thought the matter out, I asked for and obtained a fortnight's leave to go to London, and went off quite mysteriously to my old lodgings at the top of the Haymarket as usual. After a couple of days or so in town, and at my club, I slipped quietly

one day down to Sunbury-on-Thames to have an interview with a famous "crammer," who kept an establishment for preparing young officers for the army examinations, Woolwich, Sandhurst, or the Staff College. Mr (or Colonel) L——— I think he was a Frenchman—was then esteemed as by far the best man of his class, and I went to him to ask him if he would take me into his establishment for a week, test me in every way he thought proper, and let me, at the expiration of that time, know what his opinion was as to my chances of success should I wish to go up for the Staff College at Sandhurst, if, in the event of my not getting my promotion before or very shortly after the 83rd Regiment would sail, I wished to get leave to go there. "He would do this with pleasure," he said. Then came the question as to whether I should come in and live in his house, where I would be on the spot, or whether I should board and lodge in the town. He preferred I should do the former, and told off a little room about 10 feet by 7 for my bedroom. This all arranged, I returned again to town for my portmanteau, promising to be at his place early on Monday morning before breakfast. This was done, and after the morning meal was over I joined the classes, received the necessary books, and took my place with the other lads in the house, working as hard as I could, for, be it remembered, it was ten years since I passed so brilliantly those numerous scientific examinations in India. How much had I forgotten, and how much had I got out of the way of hard study? That was what I wanted to find out.

### MY FIRST NIGHT THERE.

I shall never forget my first night there. It was pretty cold weather, and I went off to bed probably about 11. Such a small bed I never had slept in, so thin the mattress, thinner still the two or three little blankets. I was perished with cold. I got up, lit a match, and had a closer examination of my surroundings. Even for me, 5 feet 9 inches, the bed was much too short, and my feet got out at the end. Under the bed was a flat tin bath, full of cold water, which, it was clear, did not tend to keep me warmer. That I pulled out, and as far from my bed as possible. All, however, to no purpose; at last I simply put on all my clothes, and got into bed in them. Then I slept fairly well till the morning. It was hard living for me—only boiled or roast beef and potatoes, followed by "stickjaw" or some such thing. Breakfast and tea to match. Never was I more glad of anything

than when that week came to an end. However, I went there to work not to grumble, so I kept as cheerful as I could under the circumstances, bore it like a Spartan, and worked away like a Trojan (not like a slave); that is the way to get on.

### **WHAT MR L—— SAID WHEN WE PARTED.**

On Saturday, just before dinner, which was at 1 or half-past it, he sent for me to come to his study. "Thank you, sir, for what you have done for me" I said, when we were seated, "how do you think I will manage?" "Well," he replied, "I have watched you very carefully, and I make not the slightest doubt that I will be able to pass you in first on the list provided you don't go up till next examination. There is one man who will beat you whenever he goes up, and he intends to go up this examination. He is the cleverest young fellow I have ever had under me; but if you come to me for any other examination, I will guarantee to put you in first if you work as you have been working this week." I must say his speech knocked me all of a heap; I had a pretty good opinion of myself, but that I had even a remote chance of being first was more than I had ever dreamed of.

That afternoon I returned to London, and the day following started to rejoin my regiment in Ireland, to "bide my time," and see how things would go in the next few weeks.

### **I WAS GAZETTED TO MY MAJORITY.**

Though both majors had expressed their intentions of going out with their corps, when the time drew nearer, and men were preparing their outfit, and it became known that probably our destination would be Gibraltar, the senior major, an old married man—a widower with a small daughter—sent in his papers, and on the 22nd January 1867, I was gazetted in his place. This, of course, put an end to my "Staff College scheme," and my duties in Dublin became those of field officer. I had no more "Mountjoy Prison," except to turn out the guard day and night occasionally, and from captain on the castle guard I became field officer on that duty occasionally.

Field officers on this guard had a bedroom allotted to them, with a very large four-poster, and after a certain hour were allowed to turn in. They had to visit all the garrison guard, even to the Pigeon House Fort at the entrance to the harbour, and had to hold themselves in readiness for any emergency. I think I was on this guard as field officer when the whole of the garrison

one day turned out under the Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, Lord Strathnairn, to oppose a very large secret meeting of Fenians to be held some 10 or 12 miles from Dublin—"Rathmines" I think was the name of the place. "They came," "they saw," "they conquered," and took a very large number of Fenian lads prisoners. So great a number that, when dusk came on, on the return march many prisoners bolted away. The troops had not enough handcuffs, and those prisoners without them lost no opportunity of trying to escape. When they marched into the castle yard, it was ridiculous to see numbers of the wretched fellows standing shivering, all holding their stomachs with both hands. When the officer in charge of a batch of these lads brought them into the castle yard to be locked up, he was, of course, asked what was the matter with them? Had they got cholera? He told a story that every young officer should hear and remember. When in great difficulty with his prisoners, he (the officer) went up to Lord Strathnairn and said, "Sir, we have not half enough handcuffs with the force for all the prisoners, and those without them are continually bolting away, or trying to do so. Shall we fire at them when they attempt thus to desert, or what shall we do?" "Take off their braces and cut the bands of their breeches" was the gruff answer of the old general, "they can't run away then." Sure enough it had the desired effect; when the braces were gone, and the breeches bands cut down to the fork, they had nothing for it but to hold them up with both hands, and thus the extraordinary appearance presented when they entered the castle yard.





**GIBRALTAR—THE ROCK (from the North Front).**  
1868.



**GIBRALTAR—CATALAN BAY AND VILLAGE.**  
1867.



## Chapter VII.

### WE SAIL FOR GIBRALTAR.

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IN the end or middle of February we sailed for the Mediterranean in that well known crimean hero, the old original P. and O. "Himalaya." It took us six days and some hours, how many I cannot now remember, though I did win the usual sweepstakes on that point, and pocketed six or eight pounds.

On arrival we were quartered in the town barracks, probably the pleasantest of the lot, and I must say the short stay I had on "The Rock" I enjoyed very much indeed. I had not a "Kodak," but I had a very good stereoscopic camera which I was fond of using, and, before I left for home at midsummer, there was scarcely a stone on the rock I did not know, if, indeed, I had not a photo of it. The galleries, the flagstaff, the batteries, the mole, the harbour, the cemeteries, and the fox-hound kennels between them; even Catalan Bay was familiar to me both on and off paper. Then, beyond it, I visited Algeciras for the bull fights and the cork wood, in which I spent days of wandering. Then over the Straits to Tangiers, and along the Mediterranean to Malaga; after that, the historic Granada, with its Alhambra, and back from there in a six-in-hand of Spanish mules—and, dear me, did not they wallop those poor mules cruelly.

These last two places I visited with an officer of the 78th Highlanders and his wife, and had a very pleasant time.

### AN ARRANGEMENT OF BOX BUSHES.

This is not a place for me to enter into a description of these places or to extol their beauties—that must be left to others. But we put up, when at "The Alhambra," at an inn called the "Sita Suella" or "Seven Sisters." It was prettily situated, and had a moderately large grass lawn at one end, beautifully kept. At a dozen yards or so from the large end window of the dining saloon, which came down to the ground, and answered the purpose of a door on to the lawn, was an erection of box bushes in nice, clean, new-looking pots. They were all exactly the same



shape, and stood on a wooden pyramidal stand made on the general principle of garden stages, painted green, in all about five or six rows, a single plant being placed on the top. The box plants were clipped, each about 18 or 20 inches high, the pots perhaps 9 inches. They were all, both bush and flower pot, exactly the same. It was a simple, suitable, and an extremely pretty erection. I never saw anything, either before or since, the least like it, and it surprises me that no one has ever copied it in this country.

### NEGOTIATIONS FOR FURTHER PROMOTION.

It will be remembered that for only a very short time before we sailed from Kingston Harbour I had, on the 22nd January 1867, been gazetted to my majority in the regiment, and the old widowed officer had made up his mind to leave us. That being settled, soon after we reached Gibraltar the colonel commanding also made up his mind to retire, and opened up negotiations to that effect with myself and others interested.

It was the old time of "purchase," and we were in those days in the 83rd asked a good sum "*over* regulation." That was the part we had ourselves to negotiate about, the "regulation" portion being looked after by the Horse Guards. I arranged that the heads of each rank should look after that rank, and find out how much each man in it would be willing to give towards the step, and in a few days we were able to tell the colonel how much he might expect from us. But there was a hitch. That hitch was the senior major. He had (very unwisely) put his name down for purchase, but would give only the regulation amount. At that time no colonel would have left under such circumstances, and as the senior major, to whom I offered £300 to withdraw his name, declined to do so, saying "No man shall ever purchase over my head," there was nothing for it but that the proposal of the colonel should fall to the ground, and it did so. Was it wise that this needy married man should give up £300 on such an account? He stopped the promotion of others, but he stopped his own promotion too, as well as losing the money, and the colonel afterwards exchanged.

### MY STRATEGY TO OBTAIN COMMAND OF A REGIMENT.

Though I received this rebuff to my ambition, I was not going to sit down and cry or wring my hands, and I don't advise my readers ever to put that too frequent process into practice. I

went for a walk by myself along the shore "by the sad sea waves," and thought what next step should be taken. After cogitating for three or four days (for I did not even then do things in a hurry) I had formed this resolution—"I will now ask my brother officers below me what they will subscribe for me if I go on half-pay and bring a man in to sell" If, I thought to myself, they would think it worth their while to subscribe a good sum, I would try—though by no means an easy thing to do—to get such an exchange, and then, peradventure, I would have in my pocket enough money to persuade some major in some other regiment to exchange with me, where the remaining major would pledge himself to permit me to go over his head. That was "the only way," but it was almost hopelessly difficult. I did it successfully, but it took me eighteen months to carry it through.

I accepted an offer of £1600, and got six weeks' leave to go to England. I communicated with some of the exchange agents, and told them my plans. Especially did Mr A. Tull of Duke Street, St. James', assist me, and it is curious to think that he only last Christmas, and again this, having seen my name in the *Gazette* promoted to the rank of Honorary Colonel of the Princess Louise's Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, wrote to congratulate me on my success, wished me a happy Christmas and many New Years, and reminded me of the exchange he got for me long ago.

Before very long he succeeded in finding for me a retired major who would be glad to exchange, and who, indeed, was as anxious to discover a major serving, with whom to exchange that he might sell out, as I was to find such a man, and, in the interval of a very few posts, we had arranged everything to our mutual and entire satisfaction. It was only necessary for us to obtain the permission of the Commander-in-Chief through the Military Secretary to this proceeding, and so far my plan would be successful. On the proper day appointed I asked and obtained permission at his levee to have an interview with the latter officer. I alluded to this meeting on page 21, and this was what took place. On entering and shaking hands I put my written application and that of the half-pay major on the table, and stated in a few words what my business was. The old officer took up the papers, read them both carefully, and, putting them into his letter basket, said, "Yes, Major Sprot, I will see that your exchange is carried out; we want to give an officer his promotion, and this will just suit." That was not quite my game, however, and so I demurred, unless the promotion was given in the 83rd Regiment. "Oh, no," he said, "I cannot do that." "We have, sir, made

arrangements involving a good deal of money," I said straight out, "and, unless my plan can be carried out, I must ask you to return me those papers," whereupon I moved quietly up to the front of the table, and taking them out of the basket, and my hat at the same time, said, "Under these circumstances, sir, there is no good detaining you longer." So saying, I was on my way to the door, when he recalled me and said, "Oh, well, I will after all do what you wish; leave the papers with me." He did what I wished, and the whole thing soon appeared in the *Gazette*.

### THE NEXT MOVE

Was to collect the money and invest it. After spending a week on the study of the subject, examination of different stock lists, &c. (nothing can ever be done well without thought and study), off to my father's old broker I went, a man who had been not only my father's but my grandfather's broker also, and, with his aid, I selected some investments from my own paper, while some were selected by him, or by his aid, and so I invested *pro tem* the £1600 I had received from my old brother officers. After that, except an occasional visit to my exchange agent, Mr Tull (for more I could not do), I devoted my time in winter to shooting, fishing, and hunting, and in summer I travelled about visiting the different armies of the Continent whenever a chance occurred. That was a subject I made a great study of and read about much.

### TO MOSCOW AND ST. PETERSBURG.

One trip I made was to Cronstadt, having found a vessel about to sail from Hull. Three weeks or more were spent at St. Petersburg, where I made the acquaintance of Mr Baird, a son of the famous Mr Baird, who did so much for that town, making all those islands in the Neva out of the refuse from the building of St. Isaac's Cathedral, which for building purposes could not be equalled, and which he sold for some enormous sum. They had a lovely wooden villa outside the town, and there I stayed with them for a week or more.

I went over all St. Petersburg and the surroundings, including the Summer Palace, and then started away

### TO NIJNI NOVGOROD.

After a bit I thought I would go to Moscow, and then on to the far-famed Central Asia Fair. So I took train to Moscow one afternoon.



**MOSCOW—THE KREMLIN.**  
1868.



**MOSCOW—THE KREMLIN.**  
1868.



The railways in Russia were, and probably still are, remarkable for two things, first, they go nearly straight from one point to the other, viz., St. Petersburg to Moscow. The Emperor of all the Russias, it was told me, could not be bothered with the American contractors who begged a "concession," and taking up a pen drew as straight a line as he could over the map, saying, "There, follow that line, and be off." Also, there were no bridges over the line. Therefore, in some cases, they ran carriages two storeys high. In those days, at least, they went very slowly, long distances and without stopping. All the refreshment places were "subsidised" by Government. We left St. Petersburg at 3 o'clock. No one except passengers were allowed on the platform, and everything was done in a most orderly manner. The ticket was a long roll of perforated paper with the name of the stations printed on it; at each station a piece of the roll was torn off and given up. We went for about two hours, and then stopped an hour for dinner. A nice, substantial, plainish dinner, beautifully cooked, was put upon the table, and we (the passengers) all partook of it. The soup particularly attracted my attention. It was like mutton broth, but without the barley; instead, however, there were quantities of small, tender yellow cabbages, little chaps, not much larger than an orange. We finished with a first-rate cup of coffee, while paying the bill, the charge not being the least extravagant, and then the time being up, we took our seats and leisurely steamed on our way. It certainly was such a comfort not to be hurried over our food, as used to be the case in those days in England when there were no dining-cars. After another two hours or so we stopped again for the same time, but no regular dinner was served, only there were placed before us every tempting thing a man could think of—boiled salmon and tartare sauce, cold lobster and crab, pheasant and partridge, sweet puddings and delicacies, even the best London pastry-cook could hardly have made better. On to the next station, when supper time came, there was an equally nice spread. We had a band of soft music there, consisting of a woman with a concertina and a man with a harp. They were playing when the train pulled up, and they continued to play till the train went out. It was quite nice to listen to them. The carriages were most excellent institutions; there were no elbow arrangements crossing the seats, and the number of passengers were only two on each side, each having a corner. When it came to bed-time the backs, which turned up, were then fixed, and formed upper berths—one man slept on the lower seat and one

on the upper berth. The attendant produced clean brown holland covers, which slipped over the mattresses on the seats, and each was also provided with a pillow to match, nothing more. In summer we slept just as we were, and in winter each man had his own furs and his rug. We could go into the centre saloon, where soap and towels were provided, and have a good wash, and in the morning the same could be got, with a shave, and plenty of hot water. At 6 o'clock in the morning we were called, and at 7 the train stopped for an hour for breakfast. We arrived at Moscow at 10 A.M. This was luxurious travelling for me; we had no sleeping carriages on English lines then. If we wanted to sleep we tipped the guard to let us lie down at full length in a third class carriage. All first class carriage seats were bisected with elbows.

### IN MOSCOW.

I had been told of a good hotel in Moscow, kept by two sisters, English ladies, who had been governesses in a Russian family, and very nice it was; they took great care of me.

### MY CAMERA.

I do not think I have mentioned that on my return from India I determined to take to the dry process of photography, which was then (1860) in its infancy. I thought it would assist me in sending my reports into Government, of the progress of works, such as barracks, bridges, &c., &c., and I determined to master it, and try to improve it. I went to King's College in London, and there they allowed me to use their dark room. It was there I met Mr Fry, partner of Messrs Elliott & Fry, and he and I struck up a great friendship, which continued until his death. He was at work at the same business. We used first Hill Norris' process, and then the Liverpool Alkaline dry plates, which was the process I used very successfully in Russia. Mr Fry kindly allowed me the use of his rooms when I liked; he had only one or two then at the very tip top of one of the two houses they afterwards entirely occupied. There is nothing that adds to the pleasure of travelling so much as having a good light camera, and that has probably something to do with the rapid way lately that travelling has increased in the United Kingdom and on the Continent.

Let me advise my readers who think of getting a camera, whatever they do get, to get a good, very good lens. If it costs

double, get a good one. I found that out in early days, and had Dalmeyer's and Ross's, then the two best makers—one French, the other English. That is forty-seven years ago, and they are going still, and taking most excellent pictures. What is more, they are not only clear and giving excellent detail, but there is no distortion in the picture.

This volume has many plates from my old pictures taken by these cameras. Those done at Moscow, which were very numerous, were not developed until I got back to my lodgings in London—a fortnight or three weeks later. They are not as good by a long way as they would have been had they been developed the same night, but, under the circumstances, that was impossible. They were all taken on glass plates kept in light-tight boxes. There were no films in those days (1868).

### MY CHUM.

My chum *pro tem.* in Moscow was the German waiter. I did not know a word of Russian, but the two ladies who kept the hotel spoke English, and as I still, to a certain extent, remembered the German I had learnt and spoken when at school in Dresden in 1847-48, I hit it off with the waiter, who was quite a nice young fellow, and he, with the two ladies' permission, took me about the town, the fortifications, and the surrounding suburbs—of which I photographed so many views—showing me almost everything. I considered the ladies were very kind to thus oblige me, and, all in all, I had not a bad time of it, though, thanks to the difference between Russian dates and English ones, of which I knew nothing at the time, I missed the Nijni Fair, and had to go home without seeing it, as I found it nearly three weeks later than I thought it was.

### HOMEWARDS BOUND.

On return to St. Petersburg, I found at Cronstadt a steamer which would be ready to start for Hull in three days. She was laden with timber, and, hearing she was a pretty good vessel, engaged my passage in her. On the day appointed for sailing I found myself the only passenger, and went on board about mid-day. The vessel was fairly loaded up—they were putting the finishing touch to her, and we were to go out of harbour about 3 o'clock. But, when 3 o'clock came, we were sticking fast in the mud at the bottom of the harbour, and there remained until a great part of the cargo was removed on shore



again. Under these circumstances, we had to wait till the next day. This little carelessness did not raise the captain in my estimation, I can assure you.

Under the circumstances, as might be supposed, we were, on the following day, hurried off, but, when we got outside the docks, a very considerable time elapsed before everything was ready to take the open sea.

Outside Cronstadt Harbour there were painted on the walls large black lines and letters of the compass, which excited one's curiosity, and, on enquiry, I was informed they were there for the adjustment of ships' compasses, which were not always trustworthy—a very necessary precaution in the Baltic.

All the morning I poked about the vessel, and, on going down into the cabin, I noticed the chart open on the table, and, understanding these matters quite well from the instruction I got on the voyage to India, I took a look at the outward course of the vessel, which day by day was marked on it. It then became quite clear to me that the course the vessel had been steered was very much out of the proper one, for it lay among islands, &c., marked in quite clear letters, "Dangerous rocks and shoals," and was many miles further away to the south-west than it ought to have been. "How did this occur?" I thought to myself, "there is the same great stupidity here as showed itself in the grounding of the ship in her loading." So, when I returned to the deck and saw the captain, I remarked to him in a casual sort of a way what I had seen. His reply was, "Oh, the compasses were all out"; and, when I pointed out on the walls the singular arrangement for correcting them I have already referred to, he answered, "No, I haven't, the compasses are always wrong more or less in the Baltic." What could I do? It was impossible to leave the steamer at that point, so I concluded that on I must go, but not a stitch of my clothes would I take off when I turned into bed, and would watch this fellow closely, and also find out where the life buoys were kept.

My cabin was amidship, on the poop, and the window looked out on the main deck. When 10 o'clock came I went off to lie down, clothes and all, and soon fell asleep, until suddenly I started up in my dreams, hearing someone shout out at the top of his voice, "Hard a-port, stop her," for I well knew that "Hard a-port, stop her" in the middle of the night and the middle of the ocean meant danger. In an instant I was out of my berth, on with my cap, and up the companion ladder as fast as I could run, getting on deck just in time to see the big steamer, in the



**MOSCOW—CHURCH OF OUR LORD.**  
**1868.**



**MOSCOW (from the Kremlin).**  
**1868.**



dusky grey of the morning, going straight on to a great black rock. Only a merciful Providence could have saved us from being wrecked had we arrived the least bit earlier in the morning. At that time the rock would not have been seen. Had the mate not been watchfully on the lookout, and shouted his order as loud and peremptory as he did, the vessel could not have been saved. Had the man at the wheel not instantly and firmly obeyed his order—had the engineman below not promptly carried out his instructions—had we not had deep water up to the very edge of the rock itself, and thus been able to turn, most surely we should have been shipwrecked, for, as the good ship slowly turned, I could have easily thrown a biscuit on to the land. As it was, we escaped. We went back on our course until out of danger. When daylight came we found out our position, and went on. We were at the extreme north end of the island of Gothland, many miles out of our course.

When this occurred, where was the captain? In due time we got back into the proper channel, ultimately reaching Hull without further misadventures. The captain, I heard afterwards, was dismissed by the company to which the steamer belonged.

### **HOW I LEARNED ALL ABOUT NAVIGATION.**

When I sailed in the *Zion's Hope* for India I was the only youngster on board—a hard-working, thoughtful, industrious youth just turned nineteen. All the others were old people; an old captain commanded the company, an old Peninsular major with a medal and ten clasps (and his wife of the same age) had command of the whole detachment, the skipper, and the ship's doctor—that was all of us. I had my little "tin soldiers" which, aided by the red drill book, I manœuvred on the top of a hen coop daily. There was no library on the ship, and all the stray books about I had read through and through before the Peak of Teneriffe was reached.

From the sailors I learned all the ropes, sails, spars by name, belaying pins, and pulleys on the ship, and spent half my days climbing about in the rigging.

One fine morning the gruff old captain took me into his "Captain's Cabin," and there I saw his quadrants and his small library of nautical books. He was a kind old fellow, and, on being asked, he let me take his books one by one and read them; perhaps I would express myself better by saying "study" them.

Ultimately, after some pressure, he let me have the use of his oldest quadrant; "But you must take the greatest care of it, young fellow." Each day after that (which was when we were passing up the Mozambique Channel) I took the same observations as the skipper, and worked them out "to check his work," as I told him; so we went on day after day, until one evening we found ourselves off Bombay. No pilot was to be got, so we must "lay to till the morning." Then it came into my head, "Why not take her in by the fixed stars?" I had studied that, and for some weeks, by the help of these stars and the old quadrant, determined the position each night of our trusty vessel on the earth's crust. So off to the skipper I started. At first, he said, "Nonsense, young fellow," but, when I added, "and you'll help me, sir, won't you," the kind old chap gave way, and what with my three observations of these stars, our compasses, the soundings, and great care, we did what we wanted, and brought her into Bombay Harbour without the aid of a pilot.

Afterwards I had a small 6-ton yacht in Kurrachee Harbour with a brother officer, while quartered there for some three years, and used it for duck, other wild fowl, and flamingo shooting in the harbour and round the coast, and in the mouths of the Hubb River.

MORAL—Never lose an opportunity of learning *anything* when you can get it, for it is sure to be useful some day. If you neglect to do so, you are only wasting your time.

### BACK TO LONDON.

On returning to town my first step was to visit the exchange agent. He had found a regiment just home from India, and quartered at Dover, whose colonel was anxious to retire by "selling out," whose senior major would like to exchange on to half pay with me, and whose junior major was desirous of exchanging to return to India immediately, he being a married man with a family. In a few weeks he would be out of my way, and he further promised not to put his name down for purchase, or in any way prevent my carrying on negotiations with the colonel; to make quite sure he gave me this promise in writing.

There was practically no doubt that young as I was nothing would be done at the Horse Guards to prevent my succeeding the colonel, and thus getting command of the 91st Argyllshire Highlanders, but, to make sure, I had all my testimonials printed, as published in Appendix I. of Volume I.



LIEUT.-COLONEL SPROT.  
1870.



On my part, I was to pay the major who went on half pay in my stead just what the 83rd Regiment gave me to take the half pay retirement, and a considerable sum would have to be raised by myself and the officers of the regiment who would share the promotion with me, when the colonel left. In a few days I had had interviews with all these officers, and had quite satisfactorily arranged preliminaries.

### THE RESULT OF MY INVESTMENTS.

After this I proceeded to the city to draw out the £1600 I had invested, and when my broker had realised the money I found it had fructified to such an extent that my balance came to about £2100, thus leaving me a surplus of £500.

Not long after this, Major Battiscombe, the senior major, and myself were gazetted; he was relegated to half pay, and I was, in his stead, appointed a major of the 91st Highlanders, with orders to join at Dover, which I did in August 1869.

Then we set to work in earnest to collect the money for the colonel, Berty Gordon. My share I borrowed from an uncle, giving him a bond for the same, just as I had done with my father when he very kindly lent me the amount I had to give for my majority in the 83rd; neither of them allowed me to pay them any interest. When everything was squared and settled as the colonel desired, he determined to go on his winter leave before finally retiring from the Army.

Then I took a month's leave, so as to be ready to rejoin and take command permanently when the colonel left for his last winter's leave.

After obtaining the necessary official permission to go abroad for a month, I went over to Schwalbach in Germany, and there meeting the object of my affection, I was fortunate enough to get engaged to her, and we got married on 20th October, rejoining after a short honeymoon at the end of that month, so that it was said, as an example of my great good luck, that I had obtained a wife and succeeded to a command of a regiment in the same month.

On the 29th of January 1870 I was gazetted lieutenant-colonel, and continued to command the Princess Louise's Argyllshire Highlanders from October 1869 until January 1876, when I was appointed assistant adjutant-general, and quartermaster-general for Scotland, and quartered in Edinburgh.

When gazetted, I was the youngest lieutenant-colonel in the Army save four, and they were all in Cavalry Regiments.







**RIDDELL HOUSE from East.**



**RIDDELL HOUSE from South.**







The "Ale Water" at "The Scar" opposite the House at Riddell.

## Chapter VIII.

### SHORT RESUMÉ OF LATTER PART OF LIEUT.-GENERAL SPROT'S LIFE.

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TOWARDS the close of 1869 Major Sprot joined the 91st Argyllshire Highlanders at Dover, succeeding to command early in the following year.

With his regiment he moved to Aldershot in the summer of 1870, remaining there till 1871, when they were ordered to Fort George. Here he remained till 1873, when he proceeded with the regiment to Edinburgh, there to be stationed until the summer of 1874, and, during this period, there occurred the night manœuvres, of which a description has already been given in this volume.

In 1874 the regiment under his command was ordered to Newry, and in January 1875 Lt.-Colonel Sprot was promoted to the rank of Colonel. He accompanied his regiment a few months later to the Curragh, and in December of the same year relinquished command, to take up the duties of Assistant-Adjutant and Quartermaster-General for Scotland. He remained in Edinburgh in this appointment until 1878, when he received command of the 47th Sub-District Brigade at Maidstone, and later the 31st Surrey (South London) District at Kingston-on-Thames, which appointment expired in December 1882, on which date he was placed on half-pay and promoted to the rank of Major-General.

In this rank he was unable to accept any of the appointments offered to him owing to the death of his father, which occurred in 1883, and he retired with the honorary rank of Lieut.-General to superintend the management of the estate of Riddell in Roxburghshire, to which property he had succeeded. He was then in possession of a house at Eastbourne, and for several years spent the winter months there to avoid the rather more severe winter of Scotland. During the years which followed his succession he took an active part in county and parish affairs, being a member of the County Council, Lilliesleaf Parish Council, School Board, and various other local bodies, in addition to

which he was a Justice of the Peace, and Deputy-Lieutenant for the county of Roxburghshire.

He was also a member of numerous other associations, of which, perhaps, those affecting the welfare of the soldiers and sailors were the ones to which he most keenly applied himself.

Always an enthusiastic farmer, he took great interest in the management of his estate, devoting a large amount of time to it, building cottages and making improvements wherever he thought fit, and these gave him ample opportunity for experiments, in which he always delighted, with a view to improving the property.

Until the last he retained great keenness for all manner of sport, though latterly able to enjoy little except shooting. Sport had in his later years given way to motoring, which had numerous attractions for one who had always a "penchant" for engineering in any shape.

He was a member of the Meteorological Society, and daily took records for that Society with the numerous instruments which he had had installed at Riddell.

Although he had many years before disassociated himself from Her Majesty's Service, his interest in the Army had never lessened; and when, in April 1905, he was appointed Honorary Colonel of his old regiment, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, his pride and pleasure were intense.

Up to this time his regular habits, and the exercise he constantly took must have been great factors in preserving the wonderful health and energy which he always enjoyed, until an accident in 1905 interrupted his exercise and affected his health. He had to a great extent recovered, and once more was indulging in his old interests and hobbies when, early in March 1907, a serious illness overtook him, and, to the grief of his family, he died on the 19th March in the beautiful home which he had always loved so well.

Escorted by devoted servants of the estate, and preceded by the pipers of his regiment playing their last farewell to their chief, his remains were interred in the family mausoleum with the military honours which so good a soldier had so fully earned.



**SOUTH LODGE, RIDDELL.**



**WEST LODGE, RIDDELL.**





## APPENDICES.



## **APPENDIX I.**

**"IOH DIEN."**

On the Best Mode of  
**Providing Recruits & Forming Reserves  
for the British Army**

**Taking into Consideration its Various Duties  
in Peace and War**

**By Colonel SPROT**

**91st (Princess Louise's) Argyllshire Highlanders**

Being the Subject proposed by  
The Council of the Royal United Service Institution  
For its **GOLD MEDAL, 1874.**

## GENERAL SUMMARY.

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In the system described in the following pages it is proposed:—

To raise the pay of the soldier in some things slightly;

To improve his condition very materially;

To educate him more thoroughly, and instruct him in a trade;

To increase his freedom of action without detriment to discipline;

To raise the pay of the non-commissioned officer very considerably;

Also his pension greatly;

To add something to his free clothing;

To raise the pay of the officers slightly;

To add 1000 officers as a reserve on detached pay somewhat higher than half-pay;

To allow their promotion to go on while so employed;

To give every facility to exchanging;

To increase the Regular Army by 11,000 men;

To add a Regular or Army Reserve of 56,000 men in the Infantry, 24,000 in other arms, and increase the Militia Reserve to 49,000;

To improve the barrack accommodation for both officers and men and married soldiers considerably;

To improve the training of all ranks, by increasing schools, improving technical teaching of non-commissioned officers, and giving perfect facilities for instruction of recruits at all headquarter stations;

To thoroughly amalgamate the Regular Army, Army Reserve, and Militia Reserve;

To form an almost separate Army for India, totally devoid of the usual objections to local armies;

To allow more than one quarter of the Army at home, and a very much larger proportion of soldiers in India, to become eligible for pension;

To diminish the length of Foreign Service;

To raise the strength of regiments at home to 800 non-commissioned officers rank and file, with more officers than at present;

To enlist primarily for three years, with prospect of either pension at the end of twenty-one, or 4d. a day for nine more years in the Reserve at the end of three;

That, with the exception of line depots at depot centres, the localisation scheme now coming into operation remain;

To increase the whole effective Army available for service in time of war, in any part of the world, from 139,000 to 239,000 very superior troops, with no apparent difficulty in obtaining recruits for the same;

This to be accomplished at an immediate saving to the country of about £2,000,000, and an annual saving of £300,000.

## INTRODUCTION.

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IT is unnecessary, in connection with the subject of this essay, to enter upon the abstract question as to the purposes for which an Army is required by this country. Events of recent years have shown that, however great a protection for our shores exists in our fleet, it would be wise and prudent to have at our command, ready for any emergency, a considerably larger force than hitherto could be counted on. It seems to me, then, that the object of this essay should be to show how the largest possible Army could be raised and kept in a state of disciplined efficiency and contentment on the part of the men, and that without doing violence to the instincts and genius of the British people, and without exceeding a cost which the average Englishman would consider moderate.

I endeavour to show in what follows how a force of thoroughly well trained and efficient troops of about 239,000 non-commissioned officers, rank and file (that is, at least 100,000 in excess of the present number) can be maintained at home at a cost very considerably less than that voted for the present year.

This Army, which does not include our forces in India or the Colonies, would, in the event of a national war, be ready to take the field at home or abroad at a few days' notice.

The essay, in accordance with the subject as stated in the title, naturally divides itself into two parts—I. "The best mode of procuring Recruits"; and II. "The best mode of forming Reserves." Under the former head I consider the various means at our disposal to induce men to join the service as recruits, taking into consideration and examining critically the means already existing, showing how some of these are quite satisfactory, others requiring some alteration, while others again are either in themselves or owing to circumstances so unsatisfactory as really to act as repelling causes. I also suggest various additional means by which the great and fundamental process of recruiting may be successfully carried on.

Of course, the first and most important means of obtaining recruits is by direct remuneration. The direct pay of the soldier I do not mean to consider, as I do not see how its amount could be seriously altered, although various methods are suggested by which the soldier could obtain more advantage from it. I shall mainly, therefore, consider the question of bounty (not paid, as

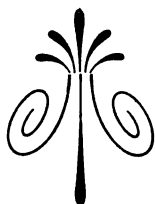
## Introduction.

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heretofore, on the man enlisting, but at the expiration of his first term of service), which is undoubtedly one of the most patent and direct attractions; and I hope to be able to suggest a plan by which both the soldier would be benefited and the field of recruiting widened.

I also consider in some detail what may be called the indirect attractions of the Army—the means by which, when recruits are obtained, they may be induced to remain contentedly at their duties. The means I suggest would, I believe, by raising the reputation of the Army in point of intelligence, *morale*, and respectability, also greatly widen the field for recruits.

In Part II. I consider the various methods by which a sufficient and efficient Reserve may always be at the command of the country.



## PART I.

### THE BEST MODE OF PROVIDING RECRUITS.

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#### I.—Direct Inducement to Enlist—Bounty.

SHOULD the supply of recruits ever fall short, the method <sup>a. Deferred Bounty.</sup> of enlistment most satisfactory alike to the State, the Army, and the class from which they are drawn, would be to offer a “bounty,” not, as heretofore, on the recruit joining, but to be paid at the expiration of his line service.

The bounty (as was formerly the case) would vary from time to time according to the demand for recruits, and should rise and fall at the discretion of the Secretary of State for War.

It must be remembered that the soldier is bound for a *term of years*, and that his pay, if raised, cannot be reduced, no matter how much the price of labour may happen to fall; whilst the artisan or labourer is, as a rule, liable at any moment to have his wages lessened if trade slackens or labour becomes more plentiful. This last, be it observed, may occur from cessation of emigration consequent on diminished demand for labour in America and the Colonies.

The “bounty” system operates differently. A sum of money payable at the expiration of their limited service is offered to induce men to enter the ranks; should that sum be insufficient and more men be required, a higher and a higher price can be offered until the ranks are full. But there is no reason why this high bounty should continue. When the labour market falls, the bounty can be reduced also, and should recruits be content to come forward without bounty, then it would be unnecessary to offer any.

Some soldiers, on passing to the Reserve at the expiration of the first term of service, either at the end of three or six years, might suppose that this plan would act unfairly, because those leaving in one year might receive a greater or less sum on retirement than others who leave the next, all having served the same



length of time and with equal fidelity. This is not, however, the case; the man who receives the greatest sum enlisted at a time of difficulty, or danger, or of great commercial prosperity, and gave up advantages which he might then have had, for service with the prospective advantage of a larger deferred bounty.

In the present method of enlisting we consider the recruit alone, quite independently of his parents, the result being, as is well known, that few lads enter the Army with the consent of their friends. As a rule, young men run away from home and go to large towns for the purpose of enlisting; but I think it would be wise policy to have the goodwill of the parents on our side, and this, I think, could be obtained by means of the "deferred bounty." Let us suppose the case of a lad born of poor parents, who, after having served some apprenticeship, enlists. After remaining for a limited time in the Army, he returns to his village in possession of his deferred bounty, with which, and his Reserve pay, he would be able to start in some trade, or set up a business, thus being enabled to support himself and those dependent upon him.

By this system three classes would be benefited.

First, the public, who would pay no more than is absolutely necessary.

Second, the Army; because increase of pay given in this way would be better applied than when given in the form of weekly pay, and would have a tendency to induce men to save for the purpose of increasing their little hoard on leaving.

Third, the parents, who, for the reasons stated above, will receive back a son not penniless, as is at present too generally the case, but with what they would regard as a good round sum in his pocket.

The question of improving the class of men in the service is one, too, which has lately been constantly before the public. The deferred bounty affords us the means of doing this. The higher such bounty is raised, the better will be the class, or the greater the number of men from whom to select; but to what extent this should be carried is a matter for grave consideration.

The pay of a soldier would then be divided into two parts—a small fixed daily sum (amply sufficient for immediate wants), and a varying bounty on discharge, the result of a bargain made before joining.

Certainty is a great element in inducing people to join the service, and this should be carefully remembered in regard to the bounty. Therefore it appears desirable that, in the event of

the death or discharge (invalided) of a soldier, a proportion of his bounty, according to the number of years he may have served, should go to his next-of-kin in the former, and himself in the latter case; and forfeiture should only be caused by dismissal or desertion, unless the deserter returns and completes his service.

There are, I think, only two cases in which it is not likely that the foregoing propositions could be carried out in their integrity:—Enlistment with the immediate prospect of field service or service in distant foreign or unhealthy climates, in both of which conditions life is more uncertain.

b. Immediate Bounty.

Under these exceptional circumstances, it will probably be found necessary to have recourse to the old system of paying the bounty down on enlistment.

The great advantage of deferred bounty over deferred pay is that it enables the country to take advantage of the fluctuations of wages in the labour market, and also of the variation in the number of recruits required.

c. Deferred Bounty—Increase of Daily Pay.

A general opinion prevails that by raising the daily pay the age and class of recruits thereby attracted to the Army will be all that is desired.

Though I should much wish to see the wages of the soldier increased in some manner, still the proposition of adding to the daily pay must be approached with great caution.

Is it likely that the country will readily increase the pay sufficiently to induce men between twenty and twenty-five years of age to leave the occupations they have followed from boyhood, and in which, if intelligent, well-behaved, and strong, they are probably rising, in order to join the service?

And suppose the increase of pay fail to improve our ranks to the extent that may be desired, can it, without danger, when once given, ever again be reduced or cancelled?

It is said that by raising the pay until we induce a sufficiency of men of from twenty to twenty-five years to enter the service, we shall be saved the expense of keeping a proportion of very young soldiers: But even should this be the case, which is doubtful, it seems a question whether it would not be cheaper—certainly better—to keep up a continual flow of young men in addition to the necessary strength of our Army, than to raise the pay of the whole by a large amount; for it should not be forgotten that 6d. a-day (only 3s. 6d. a-week) to the soldier represents, with our present Regular Army of 115,000 men (not including those in India), somewhat over one million sterling; and as it is probable that a similar increase would be given to the Militia,

a total sum of one and a quarter million per annum would be required.\*

## II.—Indirect Inducements to Enlist.

a. Existing Inducements requiring little or no alteration.

There are many inducements to enlist, besides the daily pay, food, fuel, lodging, clothing, and medical attendance, offered to men to become soldiers. The principal of these are:—

1. *Regimental Schools*.—These are most praiseworthy institutions, and it is known that many men enter the Army expressly for the advantages of the education they afford, and more still, I believe, will do so when Army service is reduced to three years. Great advantage arises from attendance at school being compulsory. Were this not the case, the indolent soldier would prevent the industrious one from learning.

Recruits are now only compelled to attend school until they obtain fourth class certificates. I would strongly recommend that the compulsion extend to third class. Indeed, I should be inclined gradually to raise the standard of education among the men, keeping progress with the advance in this respect in the country at large. By doing this, combined with other means, there is no doubt that the *morale* of the Army would be raised, its reputation for “respectability” enhanced, and thus it would attract men from a much wider sphere than is at present the case.

2. *Libraries and Recreation Rooms*.—This is a source of instruction and amusement which experience has proved to be highly valued by the soldier.

The recreation rooms are now fairly well supplied with games and periodicals—and in most stations the libraries are well stocked, and the books much read; but the rooms are almost invariably too small, and of an evening are often crowded to excess. As men become better educated, a still greater number will flock to the rooms, and the inconvenience will then be greatly increased.

A much-felt want in every barrack in the kingdom is a room sufficiently large to hold three or four hundred men, and capable of being used for the purposes of theatricals, concerts, penny readings, lectures, and displays of all kinds; and the erection of some such place would give an opportunity of increasing the size of recreation rooms.

There is probably nothing that the soldier enjoys so much as concerts and displays of a theatrical nature.

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\* For this sum 25,000 men might each year receive £50 a-piece (deferred bounty) at the expiration of their first term of service.

The description of building which I think ought to be erected is one built on the cheapest and simplest plan, without much ornament; the roof to be on good acoustic principles; a stage at one end, and the building divided into three compartments by moveable double doors; one to be used as a game or recreation room, one as a reading room and library, and one as a school room. Every part of the furniture should be capable of easy and rapid removal, so that, if necessary, the building could be used as a theatre or concert room in the evening, and restored to its normal position in the morning. It should be well lighted both by day and night, and good, cheap, and simple means of warming in winter should be provided.

It is impossible to overrate the advantage attendant on such an arrangement, and the decrease of crime and drunkenness that would be the result.

3. *Regimental Gymnasia and Fencing Rooms.*—Regimental gymnasia are a fertile source of amusement. They should be provided in every barrack where 200 men or more are quartered; not the large costly erections to be seen at Aldershot, Chatham, Plymouth, Dover, Belfast, and Dublin, but small gymnasia, either in the open air or under sheds.

Many corps put these up at their own expense. The men are first taught their use in classes by a proper instructor, and then allowed to exercise themselves when they choose. Evening after evening, when duty is over, these gymnasia are to be seen crowded.

They should be erected by, and kept in charge of, the Royal Engineers' Department in the same manner as other barrack buildings.

During the winter months a barrack room, if it can be spared, should be given up for fencing and single-stick exercise, and Government should provide the light and fuel.

4. *Systematic Instruction in Swimming.*—Instruction in swimming should be given by the Regimental Gymnastic Instructor (sergeant), and greater facilities should be afforded for this and bathing than at present.

This is desirable in a sanitary point of view as well as in a military one.

5. *Canteens.*—Canteens are, I believe, really useful institutions; they provide soldiers with beer (no spirits are sold) in their barracks better and much more cheaply than they can obtain it in the public-houses of the towns, and thus they are induced to remain at home instead of frequenting low houses outside.

6. *Regimental Savings Banks.*—The Regimental Savings Bank, in which money receives  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest, is an excellent institution, but might be organised on a much more satisfactory basis than it is at present.

According to the rules in force, soldiers can be deprived of the money they have lodged in it by sentence of a Court-Martial. Captains of companies have the power of withholding it, if they think fit, for a time. In practice sometimes most vexatious delays take place when a soldier wishes to withdraw any sum.

*A Court-Martial should not have any power over this money ;* it should be as free as that which is lodged in the Post Office Savings Bank, and as easily drawn out.

7. *Situations in the Civil Service.*—Situations in the Post Office are open to men of good character who leave the Army ; but a soldier discharged with a *really* good character is much sought after, and is almost sure to find employment readily if he is sober and fairly well educated. I think that in this matter we might well take a lesson from a recent ordinance of the French Government, which has ordered that, in filling up subordinate posts in all departments of the Civil Service, preference be given to non-commissioned officers, and that in certain cases the candidates must submit to a competitive examination. This step seems one well calculated both to raise the popularity of the service and the intelligence of the men.

8. *Good Conduct Pay.*—Good conduct pay is a very felicitous way of raising the soldier's wages ; when a man proves by his behaviour that he can take care of his money, he receives it. He has proved himself a better man than others, and receives higher pay, as he can be more depended on. The good conduct warrant seems all that can be desired.

9. *Prizes for Good Shooting.*—About 80 men per regiment can receive 1d. a-day each for a year if they are first-rate shots, and can during the annual target practice make a score showing considerable excellence.

I do not attach much value to this as an inducement to enlist, but, as an inducement to pay great attention to improvement in rifle shooting, its retention is very desirable. It would be better to pay it weekly, or 2s. 6d. a-month, than in a lump sum as at present.

10. *Furloughs.*—Every soldier can, if he wishes, obtain six weeks' leave of absence annually without loss of pay, and, in addition to this, he can almost weekly during the rest of the year obtain short leaves of two days from his Commanding Officer when not required for duty.

11. *The Memorandum setting forth the Advantages of the Army.*—The system adopted in General Order XXVI. of 1874, of issuing a memorandum setting forth the advantages of the Army, was a great step in the right direction. It should be given the widest circulation, but care must be taken that nothing is set forth in it which is not binding on the State, and that it is so plainly expressed as not to allow of the possibility of misconstruction. Should men imagine themselves misled, or, as they will call it, deceived, by this document, the consequences to enlistment will be most detrimental.

As is now arranged, these papers meet with little or no circulation; they should be published continuously or very frequently in the authorised newspapers, and circulated as handbills by all recruiting sergeants and non-commissioned officers on furlough.

12. *The Instructions for Recruiting.*—The instructions for recruiting which accompany General Order XXXII. of 1873, and clause 23 Auxiliary and Reserve Force circulars of the same year, are good, inasmuch as they increase the number of authorised recruiters; *1st*, because, whenever a young man inclines to serve, there is not far distant a recruiter with full knowledge to inform him on the subject, and full power to enlist him; and, *2nd*, because many of those who hitherto were not permitted to recruit may have even discouraged the aspirants for military glory. Now many more profit, and all these praise the service they were formerly, perhaps, disposed to depreciate.

The power of enlisting should be intrusted to still more hands than at present. If half-a-sovereign is paid, and a good soldier passed by the approving officer, it should not signify who receives the money.

Non-commissioned officers on furlough might become most useful in this way, and every facility should be given for the conveyance of the recruits thus enlisted to the headquarters of the corps.

The credit the non-commissioned officers will receive from their own commanding officer, and in their own regiment, for obtaining good recruits will act as a much greater inducement to exert themselves than the 10s. enlisting money.

13. *Pensions on Discharge.*—Surprisingly few men ever reach pension; by a parliamentary return, little above  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the whole serving Army—probably not one out of every 500 who enlist.

The chances of obtaining a pension being so remote, it must be looked upon rather as a most proper reward for long service,

than an inducement to enlist; and is probably seldom, if ever, considered by recruits.

b. Existing  
Inducements re-  
quiring consid-  
erable  
improve-  
ment.

1. *Parchment Certificates of Discharge.*—The parchment certificate of discharge, with the man's character at the bottom, might be made of the greatest value; at present it is of very little. The characters are recorded in the single words, "bad," "very bad," "good," "very good," or "indifferent," and a statement is made of the number of good conduct badges in possession at the time of discharge. This conveys but little information to the civilian who is thinking of employing the discharged man; moreover, in many cases, it may mislead him. Thus a soldier who for a series of years has behaved very badly may, during the last two, be able to escape from punishment of a certain severity; he will then become entitled to a good conduct badge, and by the rules of the service his character *must* be recorded as "good." The fact that he is in possession of one good conduct badge is entered on his parchment, but it is not stated how many he might have had had he not behaved very badly during his service. These parchment certificates should convey a much fuller character—should state the maximum number of badges the man could have obtained during the years of his service. It should state if he knows any trade—naming it; if he has been examined by the Royal Engineers, and passed as a skilled artisan. The class of educational certificate he has taken should be stated, his acts of gallantry in the field, as well as his medals, and his general ability, &c.

If this could not be added to his parchment discharge, he should be furnished with a separate sheet of the nature described, which, if called for, he could produce.

Such a certificate would be an inducement to good men to join the ranks, and an equal inducement to bad ones to keep out of them.

2. *Medals for Good Conduct and Long Service, with or without Gratuity.*—The medal, with or without gratuity, "for good conduct and long service," is, of all the prizes a soldier can win (short of a commission), the highest. He must have eighteen years' service, never tried by Court-Martial, and only entered once or twice in the defaulter book during that time for even the most trivial offence. There are few men who can pass through this ordeal, but, having done so, they will be sure for life of employment in high positions of trust, which would not have been their lot had they received only on discharge a simple parchment certificate.

There is a difficulty in many cases in obtaining the good conduct medal, valued at 7s. 6d., because only a certain sum on this account is sanctioned annually. This is a mistake; it should be placed on the men's breasts as soon as they have earned it.

3. *Dismissals*.—It may be thought paradoxical to bring forward dismissals as an inducement to enlist, but it appears clear that if it were certain that the worst characters would be dismissed the service, its character for respectability would be very greatly raised, and thus, as said before, the field for recruiting would be very much widened, and the Army come to be regarded by parents and others as a calling on a par with a respectable trade. The harm that is done to the young soldiers in a company by one bad character is incalculable. Dismissal should be carried out to a much greater extent than is now possible under the head of "discharged with ignominy."

The danger and uselessness, according to existing rules, of dismissing men from one regiment is that nothing can prevent their immediately enlisting into another, the result of which is a considerable loss to the public, without any corresponding gain to the Army.

The men who are dismissed should, it is evident, therefore, be indelibly marked on some part of the body usually concealed from view. There was a cry raised against marking, or, as it was erroneously termed, "branding" the soldier, and the operation was wrongly described as "exceedingly painful." Would it not be desirable in these instances to resume the old practice, and thus get rid for ever of a few men who do their utmost—too often with success—to corrupt the well-disposed youths in the Army? It is not the soldier whom I would "mark;" it is the man who, after long and patient trial, has been found utterly worthless, a corrupter of others, perfectly irreclaimable, and is dismissed from the ranks of honourable soldiers. He is a man who, before dismissal, has cost the country much during his lengthy imprisonments, and who, if retained, will cost it still more. And should he ever pass into the Reserve (which is doubtful) he will be equally useless there.

No soldier should be *dismissed* except by sentence of a district Court-Martial, and none should be *dismissed* without being marked.

The word "dismissed," in the usual sense, should be substituted for "discharged," as it would be more acceptable to those who have been "discharged" to pension after long and faithful service, as well as to those who, as an indulgence, have been



"discharged" by purchase, to have a different word used under such different circumstances.

As the ceremony of "drumming" out of barracks is now dispensed with, the word "ignominy" might be omitted.

4. *Remuneration for Extra and Exceptional Work.*—This is undoubtedly an attraction, but it should be extended, because when extra exceptional work is exacted from men without reward it becomes the reverse of an attraction. Non-commissioned officers receive extra pay. Men employed as artizans do so also. In a regiment, servants, mess waiters, band, &c., not only receive extra pay, but are exempt in many cases while so employed from guards and duties, and so are also tailors, shoemakers, &c., and they, too, receive extra pay. But soldiers are frequently required to do extra and exceptional work without any reward, and the following two instances will serve as examples, viz.—

1. To build rifle butts, not for their own use, but for the regiments that may succeed them.

2. To act as Army signallers.

In the former case, soldiers day after day must proceed some distance into the country, carrying with them their picks and shovels, and there work hard for five or six hours in raising large mounds of earth, to the destruction of their uniform. For this they receive *nothing*—*vide* Sec. viii., [Par. 64, Queen's Regulations.

When "all ranks are to strengthen a position," the soldier is always ready and willing to work, but when the men of one corps are required, without reward or remuneration, to make roads or erect rifle butts for all regiments that may succeed them, they not unfrequently evince a strong dislike to do so.

With regard to the second case, I would draw attention to Pars. 121 and 124, Sec. viii., Queen's Regulations, and ask how it can be expected that men who are specially selected for "steadiness of conduct," "quickness and intelligence," "able to read and write well and spell correctly," and "of good eyesight," will be content, in addition to their usual duties as soldiers or non-commissioned officers, to practice signalling for several hours a-week, and receive "no emolument."

As the rules now stand, the soldier can be *forced* to work in both these cases, and has thus frequently to submit to what he considers a grievance.

But give the soldier 1d. an hour while working at the butts, give the signaller 1d. a day for the six or seven hours' practice a-week which he must have to be thoroughly efficient; and not only will the work be done well, soldiers improved in useful

military knowledge, and be contented, but their satisfaction will spread to the district, and act as another inducement to enlist.

It has not unfrequently been the custom to reward soldiers for extra work by excusing them from guards, but this falls heavily on their comrades, who are forced to perform the duty for them. When short service is fairly introduced, such a proceeding would be positively detrimental, if not impossible.

5. *Short Service and 4d. a-day in the Reserve.*—Though calculating young men of great forethought may exist who would decline to enter the service as soldiers because they cannot be certain of making it a profession for life and retiring with a pension, their number must be few. But I feel sure that the proportion of those who would like to join the Army for a few years is very large, if they knew that they could withdraw at the end of that time should they have found barrack life to be uncongenial to their tastes and habits. Such men would belong to a class superior to those which now fill our ranks, the majority of whom enlist to supply their immediate wants.

Of those men who belong to the better class, many, doubtless, on completion of their first term of service, would retire to the Reserve, while others would be glad to remain if permitted, and would eventually become non-commissioned officers of a superior grade.

The present short service of six years is too long. Six years' Reserve service at 4d. a-day is scarcely sufficient to attract men to the Army for six years' regular service in any appreciable numbers. We know that short service, as it is, is much preferred to long, and that it is difficult to induce even 25 per cent. of those who offer to engage for twelve years. There is therefore good reason to suppose that numbers who now hesitate to join the ranks would flock to the standard for three years to receive 4d. a-day for nine afterwards.

6. *Non-commissioned Officers and "Rising from the Ranks."*—The prospect of becoming a non-commissioned officer is a great inducement to well-educated, steady young men of the better class to enlist, and many, I am aware, come into the service with the full intention of becoming corporals or sergeants.

The position of the non-commissioned officers should be improved; their pay should be raised at least in the same proportion as the pay of the private soldier was raised in October 1873. In addition, sergeants should wear their good conduct badges, and draw pay and pension for them; and to enable them always to bear a thoroughly respectable and superior appearance,

they and the corporals should annually be provided with an additional patrol jacket, pair of trousers, and boots.

Rising from the ranks can scarcely be called an attraction; the prospect is too remote, and is probably not considered by one in 10,000 who enlist.

7. *Non-commissioned Staff Appointments.*—According to present arrangements non-commissioned staff appointments, can hardly be looked upon as calculated to attract, but might be very easily made to do so.

Officers commanding regiments are naturally indisposed to part with their best non-commissioned officers under any circumstances, and I fear are too apt to throw obstacles in the way of good men being advanced beyond their own corps. This, no doubt, damps the ardour of many superior non-commissioned officers, if, indeed, it does not so disgust some as to lead to discontent.

I would propose a very simple arrangement, viz., that to whatever appointment (military) a non-commissioned officer is transferred, he should always continue to wear the number of the corps from which he was taken, in addition to any other badge or distinction he may receive.

I anticipate that this arrangement would have the following tendencies:—

1st. It would increase *esprit de corps* to a great extent.

2nd. Officers of regiments would feel proud to know that the non-commissioned officers whom they now see in high positions of trust and honour were brought up in their own regiment, and will be recognised as such by the public.

3rd.—As there is no doubt that many men deliberately enter the service for the purpose of becoming non-commissioned officers, and not only so, but carefully select the regiment they intend to serve in, that regiment will be most in favour which turns out the greatest number of these superior men selected for lucrative staff appointments throughout the country.

8. *Facilities for the Transfer of Soldiers.*—Greater facilities than at present should be given to men to exchange from one regiment to another. Many good soldiers who pay £20 for their discharge would be glad to remain and pay a less sum to be permitted to exchange. It might be insisted that a man be found to exchange with him; that the commanding officer of both regiments should approve; and that £5 or £10 be paid by each man to cover expense of change of clothing, &c., and to operate as a check on too frequent changes; the men also paying their own railway fares.

The mere permission would give a feeling of freedom. Of course, long service men could not exchange with short, and no exchange would be permitted which would entail expense on the public or be detrimental to the service.

9. *Purchase into the Army Reserve.*—All soldiers who are over three years' service, and under thirty-four years of age, should be permitted to purchase their discharge *into the Army Reserve*. The amount of money should, in a measure, depend on the number of years they would still have to serve in the Reserve; thus those who have over six, £20; those over three and under six, £15; and those under three, £10. A considerable percentage of men of the above age and service purchase their discharge annually, and are lost to the country after an expensive training. Of these men I have very little doubt the majority would willingly purchase into the Reserve to complete their service, where they would be still available if required.

10. *Education in Trades.*—I have already stated that Army Schools are an attraction; education in trades would, I feel sure, form a still greater one.

To encourage a high class of men to join the ranks, I would suggest the necessity not only of improving their position in the Army as much as possible, but, while serving, of bringing them up in such a manner as to fit them better for the position they will afterwards occupy in civil life.

It is a mistake to suppose that our Army is composed principally of idlers and drunkards, and men of dissolute habits. Some of these there undoubtedly are, and there would be more of them if we restricted our enlisting to older men. A very large proportion of the men who come to our standard are lads much younger than they choose to admit, well-disposed young fellows, but who, with none to help them, have failed in the first struggle in life. Ignorant of a trade, ignorant of the commonest rudiments of education, they would be too glad to know that if they entered the Regular Army for a few years they might, at the expiration of that time, return again to civil life educated to a certain extent, and with a fair knowledge of some trade.

Workshops should be established at the headquarters of every corps, but the trades should be limited to a few.

Everything required for these should be portable, and capable of being erected in any barrack room. The difficulty of obtaining special workshops everywhere is insurmountable, and an ordinary barrack room in most cases will answer all purposes.

To carry out this plan, sentries in many garrison towns must be materially reduced, though all soldiers should go on guard regularly every eight or ten days. Those employed on a trade would do but one guard for two done by those not so employed, to compensate for the loss of their leisure.

As every regiment has already an armourer, a tailor, and a shoemaker sergeant, these three trades might always be carried on, and to them could be added a carpenter, a cabinetmaker, and a blacksmith.

Just as to the industrial schools of regiments a small money grant is made for material on which the children learn, so in the workshops a grant might be made, the money, or a part of it, to be paid in the shape of a fee to the sergeant-master of the trade.

### III.—Obstacles to Enlistment.

Whilst we are searching for means to encourage enlisting, we should be careful to see that nothing is done to discourage it; and, with that view, we should examine our Royal Warrants and General Orders with care, to endeavour to ascertain if they contain any regulations calculated to deter men from entering the Army.

In doing this, we should also ask ourselves if insufficiency of money, either in the form of bounty, pay, or pension, is the sole cause of any disinclination to enlist. I believe not; there are undoubtedly others which, though small, are sufficiently irritating.

There are what appear, in the eyes of the recruit-giving class, breaches of faith, and we should be most careful that in all our orders, and the manner in which they are carried out, not even a semblance of such should exist.

Among deterring causes already alluded to are:—

The small and uncertain value of parchment certificates of discharge in the eyes of the public.

The uncertainty in awarding the medals to those soldiers who have earned them after great length of service and extreme good behaviour.

The retention in the service, as associates for honest and honourable men, of the worst characters in the kingdom.

Forcing soldiers to do extra and exceptional work without remuneration or reward.

Power of depriving men of their savings bank deposits, and delays in paying them their withdrawals.

In addition to these there are others of greater or less magnitude, which I am desirous of seeing removed.

1. *Compulsory Discharge on Temporary Reduction of the Army.*—Many a soldier has been thus deprived of the pension almost within his grasp—or, at least, of part of it—and has been then thrown upon the world to curse the Army and the Government, to subsist by begging, sometimes in uniform, with a placard setting forth the injustice of his treatment. Such men do much harm; they are walking advertisements of the disadvantages of the profession they had chosen.

There is no necessity for such arbitrary acts. Absolutely stop enlistment for a few months, and the required reduction will be accomplished. If this method is not considered sufficiently rapid, call for *volunteers* for a free discharge. Numbers will offer; there will always be many in a regiment ready to accept a free discharge, or to join the Reserve.

2. *The Enlistment for General Service.*—The forcible removal of men under fifteen months' service from their regiments at home to fill up vacancies of other corps in India acted as a great check, and in many parts of the country put a complete stop to enlistment. Last year it was not had recourse to, and it is to be hoped will never be again.

Enlisting for the brigade, which is only a slightly altered form of the above, is likely also to act detrimentally, because of the uncertainty of being sent abroad, and unwillingly separated from old companions and comrades, family and friends.

3. *Uncertainty of being sent Abroad.*—Probably there is nothing which checks enlisting more than the uncertainty as to foreign service.

There is an abundance of men well pleased to go abroad, but none like to be forced into it. Multitudes decline to enter the service because they do not know when they may be suddenly ordered away from friends and country. Nothing acts more upon the feelings of the parents than this. After reducing the first term of service to three years, enlist specially for India and the Colonies in combination with home service (as described in Part II.). Give up enlisting for both regiments of a brigade, however convenient at first sight it may appear to be, and there will be but little necessity for offering bounties to recruits. Those who wish—and there are plenty—will come forward for long service in India or the Colonies. Others, influenced by parents or friends, possibly will take short service and home.\*

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\* Please note the great difference there is between the expression, "Service abroad (or Foreign Service)" and "Field Service." In the former case men are absent in some foreign country (India or elsewhere) for ten or twelve years, with home and parents left behind, possibly never to be seen again, and no glory. In the latter, a few short years or less, then "Death or Glory."

Volunteers for foreign service in small numbers can be taken from home regiments, provided always the men are not over one or two years' service, and re-engage to complete twelve years.

4. *Insufficient Explanation of Army Circulars and General Orders to the Rank and File.*—These are not sufficiently explained to the soldiers. Men hear of them vaguely, form wrong impressions, find themselves mistaken, and are prone to state openly "that they have been deceived." Their complaints are often loud, the outside public hear and believe them, and enlisting is thereby affected. I may give, as one instance, Army Circular XXXVII. of 1871, par. 1. Since then many men have taken their discharge, particularly in India, firmly believing that, after having visited their friends at home, they could re-enlist if within the year. Many applied and have been refused.

Such injurious errors arise from imperfectly informing the soldiers of the effect of General Orders and War Office Circulars as soon as they are published. Those orders which affect the rank and file should all be "starred," and read and explained to the men on two or more parades.

5. *Excessive Night Duty.*—Until lately the constant thought has been how to find work for soldiers. Parades were of short duration, and, when they were dismissed, nothing remained but idleness. During the existence of this state of affairs guards and sentries were much multiplied.

Military officers have got so accustomed to find them in certain places that they feel at a loss to know how to reduce them now that men are required for other purposes.

In many of our garrison towns, among which I may name Edinburgh and Dublin, guard duty comes round so frequently that the men have scarcely three nights in bed out of four; on the fourth they are up all night taking their turn of sentry.

In the winter months, during the furlough season, this duty falls more rapidly, and it is then also that the weather is most inclement.

Many of these posts are of no practical use; they should, therefore, be removed; and I maintain that the necessity for their reduction exists until the duty is lowered to one night in six or seven.

Much less than this should not be allowed, because watch-keeping and sentry-duty are the most necessary as well as the most difficult part of a soldier's training, and one in which he should be kept continually exercised.

There can be no doubt that excessive night duty deters many from entering the ranks. Young men have their health injured

by it in consequence of exposure and want of sufficient rest. The training of recruits is injuriously affected by it, for they are dismissed before being thoroughly taught their drill in order to relieve their comrades.

It should, in peace time, be made a rule that men have at least five nights in bed out of every six, but never more than eight out of nine. As soon as this number is exceeded posts should be multiplied, or existing sentries doubled.

*Militia Releases.*—Militia men are greatly deterred from entering the line from the necessity of obtaining their "release." Should they enlist without the required papers they are subjected to a fine of £2, 5s. This obstacle I would wish to see entirely removed.

*The Prisoners' Room.*—The prisoners' room, commonly called the "guard room," is much dreaded by men of the better class.

All but non-commissioned officers are put into it for the most trifling offence. Thieves, drunkards, blasphemers, ignorant but well-disposed lads, are all huddled together into a room, frequently too small to hold them, nearly always cold and ill-ventilated, and scarcely lighted even by day. There they must sleep on boards with nothing but a greatcoat, and there they must remain for periods varying from a few to forty-eight hours before their cases are even *inquired into*.

This is a matter which requires much consideration: What respectable man of the better class will enter the service with the chances of such treatment before him?

*Uncomfortable Barrack Rooms.*—If we are by higher pay to endeavour to induce men of a superior class to enter the Army, we must, as far as possible, prepare for their reception by improving the conditions of barrack life.

Stoves which can be opened or closed at pleasure should be substituted for the immense fire-grates now in use; a few chairs should be allowed; and a sufficiency of light furnished to enable the men to read without difficulty of an evening, so as to make a barrack room at least as comfortable as an ordinary labourer's home.

Were these slight improvements made, many who now spend their evenings in the public-houses would prefer remaining at home by their own fireside.

These trifles have hitherto been totally neglected, and increase of pay is thought to be the only method of compensating the recruit of a superior class for the known discomforts to which he will be subjected.



More attention should also be given to the mode of messing the men; the food is good, but the manner in which it is served is unpleasant.

Ablution rooms should be generally improved; bath-rooms warmed during part of the day in winter; and the supply of water should be constant, as well for drinking as washing purposes, and not intermittent, as is now the case in many barracks.

#### IV.—Supplementary Remarks.

##### a. Desertion.

As desertion arises in a great measure either from the want of sufficient inducements to remain, or from some repelling cause, it will be well to consider the subject in this paper. It also decreases our number of men, thereby increasing the necessity for obtaining recruits.

The causes of desertion are very numerous and small, though they have a large aggregate result.

First,—It is not looked upon as a crime or disgrace to desert. No soldier is thought the worse of for doing so by his comrades, and perhaps his non-commissioned officers.

Second,—No effective means are taken to apprehend deserters.

If it is distasteful for a man to remain, there is scarcely any practical difficulty in his absconding. Of the total number of deserters from the Infantry, not more than one-third rejoin (*vide* Table 22, General Annual Return of the British Army, 1874).

In some cases men go out to the town, get drunk, remain absent, and are afraid to return.

Young lads, like schoolboys, frequently at first find themselves very unhappy at being away from their friends, and being subjected to a discipline to which they have not been accustomed, and, like schoolboys, are tempted to run away.

Recruits, like many of the class from which they are drawn, are easily offended, and often walk off in a huff.

Non-commissioned officers and others are not, I fear, disposed to do their best to prevent bad characters from deserting—perhaps encourage it.

The extra penalty put on third-class shots at musketry, which brings down upon them the reproaches of their comrades, I believe in some regiments causes men to leave.

The hope of being more comfortable in one regiment than in another, and the power of returning to the first, if they find it otherwise, by giving themselves up.

The very excessive night duty in some stations will make men desert until their corps change quarters.

These are all common causes, and men, as a rule, do not appear to have that fear of imprisonment, as now carried out, that they should.

Some of our best soldiers have deserted in the beginning of their service, and have no doubt bitterly regretted the step after their return to their corps.

I am not disposed to advise that deserters should be marked; and their *first* punishments might be very much lighter than at present. If it is thought necessary to try them by a District Court-Martial, when recommended to mercy, the whole or a very large part of the usual sentence might be remitted.

Desertion, coupled with fraudulent enlistment into other corps, or the repetition of the simple offence of desertion, should meet with severer punishment; and it is to be recommended that each such offender should, before the expiration of his sentence, be transferred to the battalion of the brigade abroad, sentenced by the Court there to remain until the expiration of his service, not so much as a punishment as to remove him from baneful influences.

Our military prisons are overflowing with soldiers, a large proportion being under sentence of "imprisonment with hard labour" for desertion.

In my opinion there are several reasons against using this mode of punishment: The expense; the loss of the services of the soldier; the check to enlistment by the knowledge of the severe and degrading punishments frequently inflicted, &c.

Degradation of soldiers should, if possible, be avoided, and in a vast number of cases it might be so, by substituting a fine for imprisonment with hard labour.

I would recommend that the forthcoming Articles of War for 1875-6 empower a Court-Martial to sentence a deserter to serve for a period of months on 6d. instead of 1s. a-day, during which time he would be confined to barracks; but he would drill, manœuvre, and do all duty with the other soldiers of his corps.

I would further recommend that a man thus sentenced have the braid removed from the cuffs of his coat, as a distinguishing mark among his comrades, until the expiration of his sentence, or until his fine be paid, which in no case should be less than the expense to which the State has been put by the crime for which he has been sentenced. Cases of desertion for the second time, or coupled with fraudulent enlistment, should be dealt with more severely.

As Army Reserve men are now only called on to *volunteer* to come out for occasional training, I have perhaps no right to

*b. Calling out of the Army Reserve.*

allude to it in this place; but as I see among so many the prevalence of a strong feeling that to retain the efficiency of a Reserve soldier it will be necessary to have him up for training once a year, or thereabouts, I allude to the subject firmly, believing that recruiting will be much affected by the decision ultimately arrived at on this point.

Many of those men who enter the Army for short periods of three or six years belong to a class who obtain more or less permanent employment. These will dislike any order or regulation which much interferes with their calling after their return to civil life, and their employers will also be affected by it.

If, then, they are frequently assembled for instruction, the result will be, either the best will purchase their discharge in very considerable numbers, or, if prevented from doing so, others of the better class may hesitate to enlist. They might with great advantage join the Volunteer Corps of their own towns.

Though the Reserve would, of course, be called out in time of war, or when war threatened, it does not appear desirable that it should be used for small wars, where regiments, rather than armies are employed. Unless at *least* twelve battalions are engaged, neither the Army nor the Militia Reserve should be disturbed.

Once every three or four years would, I think, be found sufficient to call these men up for training; but then for eight weeks, and to a camp of instruction or autumn manœuvre, so as to insure thorough discipline and drill.

c. Enlistment of Boys.

Enlistment of boys is of great importance in this part of the subject. Many of our best men, markedly many of our best non-commissioned officers, enlisted as boys; the younger the recruit in the beginning, the better the soldier in the end. I am also greatly in favour of enlisting young men, and consider that a very large proportion of such should be taken at seventeen.\*

The proportion of boys might be increased from 2 to 5 or 6 per cent. Forty or fifty lads between fifteen and seventeen years of age would not be too many in a regiment of 800. It should be clearly established that their age on joining is not below fifteen. They should be enlisted for six years' Army service and nine Reserve, and, if deserving and worth retaining, should be encouraged to extend their line service. No lad of insufficient age would be allowed to take the field.

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\* No boys for India.

### Conclusion to First Part.

The reports of the Inspector-General do not lead us to believe that there has as yet been, or that there is likely to be, any great difficulty in procuring candidates for the Army. This opinion is borne out by a reference to Table 10 of the Annual Return of the British Army, published in March last.

In examining the years from 1861 to 1873, it will be perceived that, whatever the establishment has been, the number of effectives have as a rule been very considerably under it.\* From this it may be inferred either that the Army has systematically been kept below its strength, or that this arises from some cause inherent in the manner of recruiting rather than the absence of recruits.

By Table 17 it appears that when the Army was suddenly augmented by 10,000 men, the number of recruits that joined their corps rose from a yearly average of 14,000 (taken over the previous nine years) to 24,590 in 1870, and 23,500 in 1871, showing that where recruits were really wanted they were forthcoming to the extent of three-quarters more than the normal number annually taken, notwithstanding that the bounty usually given was in these years for the first time discontinued.

There is a very general impression that the stamp of recruits lately obtained is of an inferior quality, but the Inspector-General for Recruiting has stated that this is not the case, though their ages are somewhat lower than formerly, which may account for the mistaken impression.

The abstract to Table 42 shows there were more men per 1000 over 5 ft. 7 in. in 1873 than in 1866.

The Army for the past year has been as fully supplied with men as could be desired; and although, in some places, there seems a difficulty in enlisting the full proportion for long service, there appears none for short.

Under these circumstances we can hardly suppose that it will be necessary to make any great effort to provide recruits, especially if the suggestions I have made in the foregoing pages be adopted.

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\* At the end of 1870 the Army was augmented 10,000 men, and this number was not complete by 1st January 1871.

## PART II.

### BEST MODE OF FORMING RESERVES, LARGE, EFFICIENT, AND ECONOMICAL.

#### I.—The Regular Army and Army Reserve.

THE problem which is now to be solved is how to obtain the largest efficient Army at the smallest cost.

Putting aside all personal feelings, I cannot but admit that the only economical Army to be thoroughly efficient will be found in short service and long reserves, though a fixed number of men in each regiment should invariably be maintained for long service. The fewer the number of pensioners and long service men, the shorter the period of Regular Army service, and the longer the period of Reserve service, the cheaper will be the Army. What will these numbers be?

From my knowledge I am disposed to solve the problem as follows for the Infantry, which for the present I will alone consider:—

*I. Every regiment (or battalion) should consist of 800 non-commissioned officers, rank and file, and should always have not more than 250, nor less than 220 men in the second and third term of service, viz.—from 3 to 12 and 12 to 21 years.\**

As a nucleus upon which to form the young soldiers, as examples to show them how to conduct themselves, how to perform all their duties, as well as to give a tone to the whole corps, a fixed number of veterans is absolutely necessary.

That which I have named is, I believe, the minimum number desirable per battalion, and would be principally employed as follows:—

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Band . . . . .                         | 21 |
| Acting Musicians (Boys), say . . . . . | 6  |
| Drill Instructors, say . . . . .       | 6  |
| Pioneers . . . . .                     | 11 |
| Sergeants . . . . .                    | 40 |

Carry forward 84

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\* These I will term veterans.

|  |                 |                 |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|
|  | Brought forward | 84              |
| Half the Corporals . . . . .               |                 | 20              |
| Drummers . . . . .                         |                 | 16              |
| Tailors, 8; Shoemakers, 8 . . . . .        |                 | 16              |
| Officers' Mess Waiters . . . . .           |                 | 3               |
| Assistant Cook, Plate and Pantry . . . . . |                 | 3               |
| Sergeants' Mess . . . . .                  |                 | 2               |
| Library, 1; Canteen, 2 . . . . .           |                 | 3               |
| Company Cooks . . . . .                    |                 | 8               |
| Charge of Fire Engine . . . . .            |                 | 1               |
| Assistant Schoolmasters . . . . .          |                 | 4               |
| Police . . . . .                           |                 | 6               |
| Assistant Clerks . . . . .                 |                 | 4               |
| Orderlies . . . . .                        |                 | 2               |
| Officers' Servants . . . . .               |                 | 27              |
| Grooms . . . . .                           |                 | 5               |
| Regimental Barrack Fatigue . . . . .       |                 | 4               |
| Required in most Garrisons, say—           |                 |                 |
| Assistant Clerks . . . . .                 |                 | 6               |
| Orderlies . . . . .                        |                 | 6               |
|  |                 | <hr/> 220       |
| Add a margin . . . . .                     |                 | 30              |
|  |                 | <hr/> 250       |
|  | Total . . . . . | <hr/> <hr/> 250 |

It will easily be seen, from an examination of the above list, how large a number of veterans are required in a regiment, as it is now constituted; and it will also be seen that it is not a matter of proportion that is wanted so much as a fixed number per battalion. The number of privates might be augmented without the necessity of any corresponding increase of veterans among them.

These veterans, as is now the rule, will be liable to be discharged at the expiration of their twelfth year, if not sufficiently useful to be retained and advanced. If retained, they will be selected for their special fitness as well as for their exemplary conduct.

If it were determined that these veterans, among whom is included every man over three years, should not remain, it would be necessary to employ civilians as servants, musicians, &c., and a higher rate of pay would be given to men who would be useless in the hour that a good soldier is most needed. Moreover, I believe a much longer time would be required to bring the recruits to the same state of efficiency that, with the assistance of these veterans, they would reach in three years.

*II. Enlistment for three years' service in the ranks, and nine in the Reserve, will prove thoroughly effective and most economical.*

From the statistics in my possession, it appears that, of the men who enlisted for six years' Regular and six Reserve service between 30th August of any one year and 31st July of the next (during the four years 1870-4), 15·60 per cent. were removed from the service either by death, desertion, discharge, or some other cause, in their first year; from the remainder, in their second year, 12·93; in their third year, 15·54; and in their fourth, 8·47. Although beyond this no figures are procurable in respect of men enlisted under the six year Act of 1870, the losses in the fifth and sixth years may be estimated at not less than 6 and 5 per cent. respectively. Thus, in six years, every 100 men will have dwindled down to 50.

I will, with this data, put before the reader, as nearly as the circumstances allow me to estimate, two cases. First, the home regiment and its reserve, as at present constituted, viz.—600 non-commissioned officers, rank and file (in round numbers), with not less than 150 veterans (as ordered by General Order XXXIV. of 1874, and subsequent circulars); and second, the regiment I propose, of 800 non-commissioned officers, rank and file, with not more than 250 old soldiers, or less than 220.

FIRST CASE, AS NOW EXISTING.—*A regiment of 600 strong, with not less than 150 veterans—first enlistment being for six years in the Regular and six in the Reserve.*

Of the 600 men of whom the regiment is composed, at least 150 will never enter the Reserve, as they will serve all their time in the Regular Army; therefore 450 at the utmost will go on to form a Reserve. From this number the 150 must be kept up, because, should any of these die, desert, or be discharged, they must be replaced from the 450. This 150 are composed of men of two descriptions, viz.—men in their second and men in their third term of service, *i.e.* twelve to twenty-one years. All these, if found sufficiently useful, should be eligible for re-engagement for twenty-one years; but, though eligible, only a portion in the common course of events would reach it. Estimating from a parliamentary paper of March 1873, it may be fairly assumed that about one quarter of this number will ultimately be discharged to pension at the expiration of twenty-one years.

The remainder will retire after twelve years, and there will also be intermediate casualties from different causes, though they may not be heavy.

Calculating on this basis, 38 will serve twenty-one years, 112

will serve not more than twelve. To keep up the 38 who will serve fifteen years after their first term of six, from 2 to 3 men will be required annually, and, allowing for intermediate casualties, 4 men may fairly be added.

To keep up the 112 who serve six more years, from 18 to 19 are necessary, and allowing, as before, for intermediate casualties 3 or 4, the total will be 23. The supply thus required from the 450 short-service men will be 27 per annum.

The 450 men, therefore, will be required to keep up the 150 old soldiers at an average of 27 per annum, this number of men being each year intercepted as they are about to enter the Reserve.

If anyone will take the trouble to calculate from the data given before, he will find that, to keep up this regiment to its full establishment of 600, about 100 recruits will be required annually; and that, at the expiration of each year, just one-half will have been prepared to enter the Reserve; that 27 of these will be intercepted, being the number required to fill up the quota of old soldiers; and finally, therefore, 23 per annum only will actually pass to the Reserve.

At the expiration, therefore, of six years, the Reserve of, or formed by, this regiment will amount to but 138 men, at which it will always continue.

Nor will this be the actual number available, for from it must be deducted some men re-engaged under Army Circular LXVII., 1874, par. 10, as well as all who have died or deserted while in the Reserve; and, in time of war, all those found medically unfit to take the field.

SECOND CASE, AS PROPOSED.—*A regiment of 800 strong, with not more than 250 veterans; first enlistment being for three years in the Regular Army and nine in the Reserve.*

In this case, of the 800 men 250 will never enter the Reserve, and the Reserve-forming strength of the regiment is reduced to 550, from which, as in the first case, the 250 veterans must be kept up.

Taking the same figures as in the foregoing case, 62 may be expected to receive pensions at the end of twenty-one years, and the remainder, viz.—188, will retire after twelve.

To keep up the 62 who, after completing three, will serve eighteen additional years, 3 to 4 men will be required, and, allowing 2 men per annum for casualties, a total of 6 per annum will be wanted under this head.



To maintain the 188 who, after their first three, go on for nine years, 21 will be necessary; and, if 8 or 9 be allowed for intermediate casualties, this figure will rise to 30.

Therefore, in a battalion of this size managed on this principle, 36 men will each year be intercepted from entering the Reserve.

Now, in making the calculation as to the percentage of men who in three years will be eligible for the Reserve, there are no very reliable data to be obtained, because, up to the present time, none have been so enlisted. It may be considered a fair estimate, however, to take for three years' men, the first and last and mean of the two intermediate years (*viz.*—third and fourth) of the six years' men as before calculated as to the percentage of deaths, desertions, and discharges.

Then, calculating as before, it will be found that, to keep up this regiment, 210 recruits will be required on an average annually, of whom 148 may fairly be expected to become available for the Reserve.

From these, however, must be deducted 36, the number required to keep up the 250 veterans, and 112 will pass to the Reserve each year.

In nine years, then, which completes the twelve, the Reserve formed by this corps will be 1008, which would represent its normal strength.

From this number the same proportion of deductions will be made for death, desertion, &c., after entering the Reserve, as in the former case, as well as for men becoming medically unfit for active service; but first enlistments must ALL be for short service, subject to renewal only after trial, and the 250 re-engaged men must never be exceeded.

The regiment or battalion of 600 strong is a very expensive one, because the number of officers required for such a corps cannot conveniently be reduced below its present establishment; still, considering it in every position of garrison duty, drill, discipline, and barrack accommodation usually to be found in the United Kingdom, the same executive could, with but little more labour, control equally well, in peace time, a regiment or battalion of 800 non-commissioned officers and men.

The present system is to have a weak corps during peace and a strong one (if possible) hurriedly collected when war breaks out. I should prefer a strong peace regiment, making a large Reserve, which (Reserve) should be kept ready, either to furnish effective men for active service, to form second and third battalions, or to fill up the gaps during war. The battalion should be sent on

field service at a strength best suited for what may be required. I consider the most manageable and efficient size would be about 650 non-commissioned officers, rank and file.

It will now be well to compare the cost of these regiments when both are in full working order.

As the pay of officers and non-commissioned officers, &c., remain the same in both cases, it will only be necessary to show the cost of the increased number of privates.

In case 1, the regiment has 600 Regulars on full pay, and 138 Reserve men; total 738.

In case 2, there will be 800 Regulars on full pay, and 1008 Reserve men; total 1808.

The daily cost to the State of a Regular soldier, including pay, subsistence, clothes, &c., is 2s., as taken from a parliamentary paper, 26th April 1871. The daily cost of a Reserve man is 4d., and the expense of recruiting may be estimated as follows:—

The recruiting staff in both instances remains the same; it need not enter into the calculation.

If the expense of enlisting a recruit, including his free *necessaries*, be taken at £3 each,\* then the 600 regiment will cost £300 per annum, the 800, £630, which for the first regiment will average daily 16s. 6d., and for the second 34s.

Then compare the two cases thus:—

| FIRST CASE.   |  | Daily.  |
|---|--|---------|
| 600 Men in ranks at 2s. (daily cost)                  |  | £60 0 0 |
| 138 Reserve men at 4d.                                |  | 2 6 0   |
| 23 Reserve men, their travelling allowance at £1 each |  | 0 1 3   |
| 100 Recruits, cost of enlisting, &c., at £3 each      |  | 0 16 6  |

|   |   |         |
|---|---|---------|
| Daily cost of 600 men in ranks, and 138 in Reserve— | { | £63 3 9 |
| total—738 . . . . .                                 |   |         |

Equal to £8, 11s. 2d. per 100 men per diem.

| SECOND CASE.                                     |  |         |
|--|--|---------|
| 800 Men in ranks at 2s. (daily cost)             |  | £80 0 0 |
| 1008 Reserve men at 4d.                          |  | 16 16 0 |
| 112 Men, their travelling allowance at £1 each†  |  | 0 6 0   |
| 210 Recruits, cost of enlisting, &c., at £3 each |  | 1 14 6  |

|   |   |          |
|---|---|----------|
| Daily cost of 800 men in ranks, and 1008 men in Reserve—total 1,808 . . . . . | { | £98 16 6 |
|   |   |          |

Equal to £5, 9s. 3d. per 100 men per diem.

Saving £3, 1s. 11d. per 100 men per diem.

\* Enlisting, £1, 6s., free kit, £1, 2s. 8d., travelling to join corps, average distance of say 136 miles, 11s. 4d.; total, £3.

† Men from ranks to Reserve annually.

With reference to pension, in the first case, 37 out of 738, equal to 5 per cent., will probably receive this boon; and, in the second case, 62 out of 1808, equal to rather less than  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

It will be well, before leaving this subject, to examine into the total actual cost for the twelve years of a Reserve man of the first case, and one of the second. It stands as follows:—

## FIRST CASE.\*

|   |       |    |   |
|---|-------|----|---|
| Proportion of enlisting, &c., 23 to 100 . . . . | £13   | 1  | 0 |
| 6 years' Regular service, 2s. . . . .           | 219   | 0  | 0 |
| 6 years' Reserve „ 4d. . . . .                  | 36    | 10 | 0 |
| Journey home, &c. . . . .                       | 1     | 0  | 0 |
|   | <hr/> |    |   |
|   | £269  | 11 | 0 |

## SECOND CASE.

|  |       |    |   |
|--|-------|----|---|
| Proportion of enlisting, &c., 112 to 210 . . . . | £5    | 1  | 0 |
| 3 years' Regular service at 2s. . . . .          | 109   | 10 | 0 |
| 9 years' Reserve „ 4d. . . . .                   | 54    | 15 | 0 |
| Journey home, &c. . . . .                        | 1     | 0  | 0 |
|  | <hr/> |    |   |
|  | £170  | 6  | 0 |

Saving, per man, £99, 5s., or very nearly £100 per man.

In every case, then, the expense of a regiment of 600 strong, the men being enlisted for six years' Regular and six Reserve service, with not *less* than 150 veterans, exceeds the cost of one which is 800 strong, the men being enlisted for three years' Regular and nine Reserve service, with *not more* than 250 veterans.

The regiment of 800 strong has a still further advantage over the one of 600, inasmuch as the training can be carried on more effectively.

I have already stated that three years are, in my opinion, sufficient training in the Infantry to fit a soldier for the Reserve, but this is on certain conditions only, viz., a thoroughly good regimental system of training and discipline; not the training which has been the system until lately, but a system more akin to that which the nations of the Continent have pronounced to be necessary from their very recent and great experience.

Some will say that three years is too short a period of training for the Reserve man. To this I can only answer—In what are our soldiers inferior to the Prussians that they cannot learn in three years what the Germans master in much less time?

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\* In the first case, 100 men are enlisted for every 23 who pass to the Reserve; in the second, 210 for every 112.

This part, I think, indicates most clearly the great advantage to the country of short service and a large Reserve, but I cannot bring it to a close without pointing out how very seriously the interests of all regimental officers in the Army would be affected by it, as they would have annually to pass through their regiments or companies a much larger number of men than heretofore, entailing a considerable increase of trouble and expense.

It has often been affirmed that the pay of regimental officers in England should be raised, and probably no more fitting opportunity could be chosen than the present. Increase of work should be met by a fair increase of pay; and, as the country has determined on having a Reserve (the cause of this increase of work\*), the additional pay should bear some ratio to the number of men trained and passed through a regiment.

## II.—The Militia Reserve—The Second-Class Reserve— The Militia—The Volunteers.

The Militia Reserve is no doubt an excellent institution, more especially if the men who join it from the Militia are judiciously selected, strong, healthy, active, well-to-do men. It provides for the forces in the field an immediate supply of well-grown young recruits, amounting in the Infantry to about 27,000, with 3000 more in the Artillery of sufficient age. They are superior to the boy recruits our Armies have been in the habit of receiving in time of war; and moreover, being partially trained and disciplined, they are at once, or very shortly would be, fitted to enter the ranks.

a. The  
Militia  
Reserve.

But let us turn for a moment to observe the great Armies of the Continent, whom, if need be, we are preparing to meet.

We find them giving to ALL their soldiers, without exception, a most careful and exhaustive technical training for a term of about three years; and the question which should naturally rise in our minds is—Will our partially-taught and imperfectly-disciplined Militia Reserve, when required to meet this foreign foe, be possessed of that confidence necessary to insure success? I think not, unless the proportion of more highly-trained soldiers with whom they will be associated is very much greater than could be obtained according to existing rules.

What I am desirous of impressing upon my reader is that, if

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\* The public should know that the additional number of recruits consequent on a Reserve causes a considerable loss of money to both officers and sergeants, by contingent expenses, debt, and desertion, &c.

we take the field against a Continental nation, whether we have or have not allies, we shall find ourselves opposing an Army in the highest state of training, recruited continually from a highly-trained and well-disciplined Reserve, with one which may be equally well-trained and disciplined to start with, but supported only by a Reserve (comparatively speaking) of very inferior quality, for the average training of the Militia Reserve can scarcely exceed four months altogether. Therefore, notwithstanding the fact that, even under the most favourable circumstances, the Army Reserve man exceeds in average annual cost the Militia Reserve man, I would strongly urge that the Army Reserve be increased to the greatest limit. We are constantly reminded by the public press that our Army, being necessarily so much smaller than that of other great nations, must be kept in a higher state of proficiency to compensate for its numerical weakness, and of this there can be no doubt.

The Militia Reserve must not be despised, however, for in its proper place it is of great value, and a most economical force. The numbers might be increased in proportion to our Regulars and Army Reserve, up to at least one-half of the whole Militia force of the kingdom.

b. Second  
Class  
Army  
Reserve.

All soldiers receiving a daily pension from the country should be called upon to serve in its defence in case of invasion (but at no other time), provided that they are not incapacitated from age, infirmity, or sickness; and they should continue their services as long as necessary. They should not be called upon to serve out of the United Kingdom, but should be kept, when called out, as near their homes as possible, and be more especially employed on the less onerous duties of a garrison town or fortified place. Their example and experience would be invaluable to the younger soldiers and Volunteers with whom they would be associated. As they are already in receipt of pension, no retaining fee is required. When called out they would, of course, receive the pay of their rank, in addition to and together with such support as is usually given to the wives and families of soldiers during their necessary separation.

It is quite unnecessary ever to call them up for training.

This scheme naturally would only be made to apply to our future pensioners.

c. Militia.

The Militia are a good old constitutional force, and very economical. The training they receive is but limited—twenty-eight days in a year; six months in a whole term of six years' service. They are instructed in the first three parts of the Drill

Book more or less perfectly—the ABC of a soldier's training. They have no sufficient practice in guard-mounting and sentry duty—the most important in the Army. Of marching, as a rule, they have none. They seldom or never have an opportunity of practising outpost and other varied duties now found necessary; no doubt, however, as the requirements are felt, these extra duties will be taught, even in the short space of time allowed.

In this service everybody's convenience must be consulted, and it might not be practicable to do so; but I am of opinion that they would, under present circumstances, learn more of soldiering by being called out for two months every two years instead of for twenty-eight days at a time.

The Volunteers have, perhaps, really done more for the Army than anyone would suppose; they have popularised it. The soldier is now more thought of and better understood by everybody. In this respect the line, which must always be looked upon as the real Army of England, owe the Volunteers a debt of gratitude. d. Volun-  
teers.

In regard to their efficiency, they too, like the Militia, confine themselves to drill, being unable, from force of circumstances, to attend to the higher points of a soldier's duties; but, generally speaking, they have a very superior training in the use of the rifle, and possess many other qualities which would render them of great service in the hands of skilful generals.

They should, whenever possible, amalgamate themselves with the line regiments, and the Army and Militia Reserve of their brigade, when the former are called up in the autumn for periodical manœuvres.

The existence of Volunteers kindles a military spirit through the country that could not be raised in peace time in any other way. It also has a good moral effect on the youth of the country; it deserves even more encouragement than it receives at present, although, at the same time, the standard of efficiency might be further raised.

### III.—Reserve of Officers.

A reserve of officers is perhaps even more necessary than a reserve of men. In a few months the private soldier can be in a measure prepared to enter the ranks, but not so the officer; and the responsibility in war time that falls upon officers, and the necessity for a high training, is beyond all doubt.

In time of peace comparatively few officers are sufficient to

perform the duties of the Army; but in time of war they must be indefinitely and immediately multiplied. They are required to replace those who are removed by sickness or death, employed on the "staff," or taken for what I should prefer to style "auxiliary" duties.

These "auxiliary" duties are of great importance, requiring numbers of the best officers.

Officers are wanted as acting assistant adjutants and quarter-masters-general, brigade-majors to small detached forces, and aides-de-camp, to take charge of telegraph and signal stations, to survey and reconnoitre, to collect carriage, to superintend the forming of camps and erection of huts, making of roads, building of bridges, besides a number of other auxiliary duties too numerous to be here named.

Officers will also be required for second battalions when they are suddenly formed, and it is very important, therefore, to have a Reserve at hand.

This Reserve should, for the infantry, consist of about 1000, principally lieutenants, with a few captains. When required, lieutenant-colonels and majors can always be obtained by promotion from the rank next below. The great demand will always be for *well-instructed* subalterns.

This Reserve should receive pay at a rate somewhat higher than the present half-pay.

Every facility and encouragement should be given to exchanges between officers of this force and those actively employed.

No subaltern under four years' service should be permitted to join the Reserve, and all the officers in it should be bound to keep pace\* in professional education with those on the active list.

To obtain these officers I would propose to augment the number of lieutenants in regiments so as to have 2 per company, irrespective of the adjutant.

When the regiment is at home 7 will be borne on the Reserve list—when abroad 3; their names remaining in italics in the cadre of their corps, their promotion going on as usual.

The names of captains who are adjutants of the Reserve Forces, and all officers in analogous positions, would be on this list.

In addition to the subalterns there should be 2 reserve captains for each regiment.

This would give 282 captains and 700 lieutenants, total—

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\* Required to pass all necessary examinations.

982 officers, to which might be added 18 field officers to complete the 1000.

The reserve officers, when not employed on special auxiliary service, would go out each year with the Militia of their sub-district for the training, or to autumn manœuvres with either of the line regiments of the sub-district when the Reserves were called out. On these occasions they would be reported on by the officer commanding as to their fitness for service, medically or otherwise, on the usual War Office form. This also would tend to supply a want now much felt in the Militia—the difficulty of obtaining line officers to assist in the drill and discipline of a regiment during training.

Though these officers would remain on the cadres of their regiments, in time of war (should their own corps not be in the field) they would be available for any service, or be attached for duty with, or transferred to, any corps requiring their presence, according to their own desire, or the convenience of the service.

The Reserve would have considerable attraction for those who were anxious to be appointed to perform special and remunerative duties, which so frequently lead to advancement in the profession, more particularly if a considerable number of what I have termed “auxiliary staff appointments” be distributed amongst this force. Officers desirous of temporary relaxation, or those who are anxious to remain away from their corps beyond the usual period of leave, for the purpose of travelling, or for study, or any other cause, would doubtless avail themselves of such an opportunity. But, as I have already stated, it is absolutely necessary that every facility be given to their returning to full pay when they may desire it.

#### **IV.—Brigade Depots and Depots of Line Regiments.**

It is scarcely eighteen months since the new system of brigade depots was first organized, and up to the present time but thirty have been put fully into operation, comprising the depots of sixty regiments. To pronounce any opinion therefore in so short a time would be premature. The system may be a success, or it may not. A few words, however, on it in this essay will not be out of place.

There are in the kingdom, after excluding Chatham, Woolwich, Aldershot, the Curragh, Jersey and Guernsey, ten districts, divided into seventy sub-districts. The number of these in each vary from twenty-six in the northern district to two in Cork.



The variation arises from the density of the population, because in the case of districts territory has been considered, in the case of sub-districts population.

Each brigade is composed of the two or more Militia regiments and the Volunteers of the sub-district, together with the line depots of two Regular regiments. These line depots consist of two companies from each of the Regular regiments belonging to the sub-district, with their officers, non-commissioned officers, and a large staff.

As far as forming the Militia and Volunteers of the sub-district into a brigade, and nominally attaching the two line regiments to it, goes, the plan appears to answer.

The system of recruiting is a decided improvement over previous systems, but the line depots of regiments at home will, I think, be found an unnecessary expense.

The cost of the staff of each brigade depot is £1515 a-year, to which must be added the pay of the major, 4 captains, 4 lieutenants, 4 colour-sergeants, 8 sergeants, 10 corporals, and 4 drummers\*—total, £3924.

There are seventy of these brigades, which, when formed, will, for pay of officers and non-commissioned officers, cost £274,680.

Depots at certain times most certainly are necessary, but the regiments at home, though they should be prepared with a proper organization to be able to form them at a moment's notice, do not require them continually.

Foreign regiments only should have depots, and they should consist of one company each, under a captain, with 3 lieutenants, 1 colour-sergeant, 4 sergeants, 5 corporals, 1 drummer, and 49 privates.

Each district (and there are ten) should have a general depot uniting in one battalion the depot companies of the foreign regiments.†

These depots would be of the nature of depot battalions, but in forming them care would be taken to avoid those evils which are supposed to have existed before.

Giving each such general district depot a colonel and staff equal to those of one of the present depot centres, we would require on this account £15,150; and on account of seventy

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\* I have omitted all mention of privates purposely.

† But owing to the large number of sub-districts apportioned to the northern district of England, and the small number to Ireland, the former might have three and Ireland but one general depot.

depots of regiments abroad, constituted as proposed, 10 majors, 10 adjutants, &c.—a further sum, bringing the whole to £81,246.

The colonels of the other sub-districts would remain at the heads of their brigades, commanding their Reserve Forces, managing the recruits, &c., even though the line depots be removed elsewhere. They would be each aided by a quartermaster and the 2 captain-adjutants of Militia, together with the non-commissioned officers of the permanent staff, who would be available as quartermaster-sergeants, &c. Recruiting parties from line regiments should be attached to each sub-district.

The pay of these 120 officers will amount to £36,945 per annum, and must, with the other amounts, be deducted from the saving of £274,680 before named, reducing it to £156,489. To this must be added a saving in fuel and lights, according to the regulation allowance, and of clothing, subsistence, &c., of non-commissioned officers no longer retained, which brings up the total saving to £194,473. not far short of £200,000.

Recruits who are enlisted in the sub-districts can be disciplined and drilled at the headquarters of their own corps if at home, or the large general depot if the regiment be abroad.

After expressing these views, my readers will not be surprised when I advise that no more money be spent on depot centres for the present. Thirty are entirely formed, forty remain to be completed; but all have their Militia, Volunteer, and recruiting establishments perfectly organized.

Let us first see, therefore, whether the advantages of the former so out-balance those of the latter as to render it desirable to spend so large a sum of money annually, together with the millions we are preparing to lay out in buildings which may in a few years be no longer required. And it must be held in mind that, if ever we abandon this new scheme, the barracks which are in contemplation, and those which are already being erected, will be useless for all other military purposes.

I have mentioned that each corps should always be ready to form a depot on its moving abroad. It would be done thus—each regiment should have a carefully selected drill-sergeant, who should be instructed in the best mode of training recruits; he should have the rank and pay of a colour-sergeant, and should have 5 or 6 assistant non-commissioned officers under him. On forming the depot, this drill-instructor-sergeant should be made the colour-sergeant or depot sergeant-major, and the assistant drill-sergeants should be included amongst those left behind.

I would add that the very best colonels should be selected to

command the general district depots, that the discipline in them should be the strictest, and that on no account should any detachments be furnished by them. The great fault of most depots is laxity of discipline, heightened by numerous detachments and their attendant evils.

The smaller the body the less the responsibility, and the greater the want of discipline.

### V.—India and other Foreign Service.

We have 141 regiments of the line, and it has been ruled that while one-half of these are abroad the other half must be at home. The cause assigned for this is the linking of battalions two and two. This will no doubt at times be found an embarrassing rule, and it is not necessary. Still, for many purposes, the fact of half the Infantry being at home and half abroad is not inconvenient.

Referring to Table 6 of the annual return of the British Army, published officially in March last, seventy battalions are on the home establishment and seventy-one abroad.

The period of service abroad is too long, and should be reduced to nine years for all foreign stations. Each regiment would then serve for nine years at home and nine abroad.

Those corps in the United Kingdom should have an establishment of 800 men, including non-commissioned officers, and enlist for three years' Regular and nine years' Reserve service. They would, according to the proposals in the first section of this part, each produce a Reserve of 672 in six years. The remaining three of their home service would be spent in *preparing* to go abroad.

They would, however, commence to form their Reserve in the first three years of their service at home, and, though the number of men would be small, it might fairly be expected to bring the total up to at least 800.

It is to be understood that during the whole nine years there will be a continual flow of regiments coming home and going out at the rate of about eight each year; and therefore, when the Reserves of one corps are at a maximum, those of another are at a minimum, a due equilibrium being thus maintained. Therefore, the seventy regiments would give a splendid Army Reserve of 56,000 men.

It is expensive to send short service men to India and the Colonies to bring them back again even after six years; and, further, it does not appear judicious to take into our Reserves

soldiers many of whose constitutions are more or less impaired by service in unhealthy climates. I would, therefore, treat regiments while on foreign service differently from when they are at home.

The establishment of the regiments abroad would be such as to meet the requirements of the position after they had formed a depot of 60 non-commissioned officers, rank and file, in one company.

Let me give an illustration of the manner of proceeding in the case of a regiment which it is desired to embark for India of a strength, say, 886 men (as at present). Of these, 250 will be of long service and to pension, leaving 636. Three years before going abroad it will cease enlisting for short service, and commence doing so for a term of twelve years. Before sailing, the whole of the short service men will have joined the Reserve, and 636 twelve-years' men should have taken their places, the regiment enlisting, as calculated from previously-given data, an average of about 280 per annum.

It will be seen that an Indian regiment must, during the last three years of home service, prepare for embarkation 86 more men than when on its English establishment; and, as nineteen out of every twenty-four\* battalions that go abroad are for India and the "distant" Colonies, the increase of strength to the home establishment will be 1183 men on this account.

When the corps for "near" foreign service prepare to proceed abroad (being under 800), there will be a decrease, however, of 142 men each, which will amount annually to about 327 men, reducing the foregoing excess to 856.

The depots (60 men) of all regiments abroad would be intercepted from the Reserve. They must be composed of old and trusted soldiers, and would therefore be taken from the nucleus of 250, their places being supplied by men who otherwise would during the last two years pass to the Reserve. This would add on an average 30 men per annum in the two years, and, as eight corps go abroad yearly, the excess on this account would be 480. During the first three years after the departure of the battalion very few men will be required, and these few should be engaged for nine years in the Army and three in the Reserve. Enlistments on the fourth, fifth, and sixth years would be for six years' Regular and six Reserve service; and during the last three years the regiment would be preparing for its return to England

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\* More accurately, 57 out of 71.

by enlisting again for periods of three and nine years, sending as few as possible abroad.

As all the men enlisted for these battalions are so engaged that none either pass to the Reserve or become eligible for discharge before the return of the corps from abroad (except a proportion of the 250), the number of recruits it will be necessary to send to them is reduced, after taking every contingency into consideration, to a very small annual number.

In India those men who choose to volunteer to remain and join regiments there, or on the passage out, would be permitted to do so, and become eligible for pension\* on re-engaging for at least nine years more Indian service.

The more men that thus volunteered, the fewer would be required to embark with regiments going out, and the advantage of receiving acclimatized soldiers with sufficient health to volunteer for nine years more service in India would fully compensate for the cost of pensions.

In regard to the enlistment of men for service under the above conditions it may be found (but it is not probable) necessary to offer a small bounty; and, indeed, it is only just that such should be done, considering how one man enlists for home and another for foreign service. The greater probability of pension for long service would form an additional attraction, particularly if but few were allowed to *enlist* for long service at home.

Any expenditure on account of bounty given for recruits for foreign service will be more than compensated by what is saved from the return passage of (short service) time-expired men, and the passages of those who go out to replace them; it is therefore not taken into consideration here.

The regiments abroad (except for "preparation") will cost no more than at present, as their establishments are kept the same.

This may be considered a fitting place to compare the Regular Infantry at home of 1874-75 with that which will exist should a scheme similar to that now proposed be carried out. Unless the regiments at home are kept at 800, the numbers sent to the Reserve will be diminished, and the cost of each individual increased. Unless the 250 veterans are maintained (at least at first), the training and discipline of the Reserve will be inferior.

This size of battalion gives the cheapest, most numerous, and most efficient Reserve.

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\* These pensions would be provided by the Indian Government.

## ARMY OF 1874-75.

### EXISTING STATE.

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| 70 Regular Infantry regiments at home . . . . . | 42,000        |
| 70 Brigade depots . . . . .                     | 8,000         |
| Total . . . . .                                 | <u>50,000</u> |

### PROPOSED SCHEME.

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 70 Regular Infantry regiments at home of 800 men . . .   | 56,000        |
| 19 of these preparing for India and distant foreign service<br>(increasing) 4½. Ditto preparing for near foreign service<br>(decreasing) . . . . . | 860           |
| 16 depots in process of forming . . . . .  | 480           |
| 71 „ of regiments abroad . . . . .   | 4,260         |
|  | <u>61,600</u> |
| Additional . . . . .   | <u>11,600</u> |

## VI.—Field Service.

It now remains for me to show how these forces could be best brought into the field in the event of war.

Assuming that 800 has been settled as the strength of our home regiments, then, disregarding that part of our Army which is abroad, if the rules laid down in the foregoing pages be followed, we shall have as the Infantry of our Army:—

|                                |                |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| 70 Regular regiments . . . . . | 56,000         |
| Army Reserve . . . . .         | 56,000         |
| Militia Reserve . . . . .      | 44,000         |
| Total . . . . .                | <u>156,000</u> |

But, when these forces are ordered to take the field, there will be a large deduction to make on account of men who, at the last moment, are found medically, or from other causes, unfit to proceed on active service.

Each regular regiment must form a depot, and leave with it the boys, undrilled or under-aged recruits, and sickly men. About 200 per corps may be allowed for this, so that those fit to take the field will be reduced to about 600 men per battalion. Boys and undrilled or under-aged recruits will not be found in the Reserve, and each regiment may fairly expect 750 to answer the call in a few days.

Allowing about the same proportion of Militia Reserve to be absent on the day of assembly, about 600 men per regiment still appear.

Then the numbers of the Infantry of our Army fit in every respect to enter upon immediate active service in the field will be :—

Each regiment—

|                               |     |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Regulars . . . . .            | 600 |
| Reserve of the line . . . . . | 750 |
| Militia Reserve . . . . .     | 600 |

1950

The method of bringing these troops into the field would be either by dividing the whole regiment into three battalions, each containing about 200 Regulars, 250 Army Reserve, 200 Militia=650; or the more preferable mode appears to be to call up at once about half the Army and half the Militia Reserve, and form two battalions, thus—300 Regulars, 190 Army Reserve, 150 Militia Reserve=640.

The remaining 370 Army Reserve and 300 Militia Reserve would assemble at their centres, and, having received clothing, be quartered with the depot of the fighting regiment in the barracks vacated by the corps which have proceeded to the field, not to garrison them (the Militia and Volunteers can do that if necessary), but to be prepared and held in readiness with the recruits to join the battalions of their regiments in the front when required to fill the blanks created there by death and disease.

If more battalions are wanted, they would be made up, as before described, from those regiments that have not previously been placed on a war footing. Recruiting would go on all over the kingdom, and the depots would prepare these recruits for service with their corps.

At this time the importance of having a reserve of experienced officers will be much felt. Skilful officers can use moderately good troops with effect. If the troops are very good, officers of moderate ability will probably do fairly well; but, if both officers and troops are only partially acquainted with the intricate detail of warfare, their success is but questionable.

There can be no doubt that the number of regimental officers in the Regular Army has been allowed to fall below that which is desirable, if not absolutely necessary; and, though I could scarcely recommend that the companies of a regiment should be increased beyond eight, still officers and non-commissioned officers of the depot companies should return to headquarters.

The majority of the Reserve officers, if not found already employed when war breaks out, will certainly be required at

that time for "auxiliary staff" duties, and the number available to officer these regiments will be but small.

The two field battalions and the Reserve battalion have to be officered. This will be found no easy matter, and, therefore, each of the field battalions should be formed into six companies,\* by far the most convenient number both for manœuvre and other purposes. These would be officered from the Regular regiment, from the Reserve, from the Militia, and from the country. The officers from the sister battalion must be at their posts abroad at such a time. Sufficient non-commissioned officers to bring up the new establishment to the proper number will no doubt be found among the Reserve men.

When the war has terminated, the question will arise as to what is to become of the excess of officers. They cannot be turned adrift; they should not be placed on half-pay—that is undesirable both for themselves and the public; and it would not be just to the country to keep them always on full pay. At the conclusion of hostilities, therefore, a regiment with two or more battalions would proceed as follows:—It would forward all its Reserve men to their homes. Those officers who desired it would be placed upon the Reserve list or return to the Militia, and the remainder would receive a circular requiring them to state whether they would take general promotion or regimental. All those who preferred general promotion would have their names placed on a seniority roll, though they would not be removed from the Army List, but receive full pay, continuing to do duty. All vacancies in the Army would then first be filled from the general promotion roll, provided that no officers should be brought from other corps to *supersede* a senior of his own rank next below the one into which they are promoted.

Thus, if a vacancy occurred amongst the captains of a regiment, the senior lieutenant of which was of six years' service, the first lieutenant on the general promotion roll of longer service would obtain the company, and this would continue until all supernumerary officers had been absorbed.

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\* In peace time I would also prefer six companies, each with two captains (a first and second), as better and much cheaper than eight companies with eight captains. One of the regimental majors in peace time would be with his corps, while employment on the staff or the reserve of officers would be found for the other. I have already stated my opinion that we are under-officered at present, and I have arrived at this conclusion because I believe the almost invariable success of our arms greatly attributable to the large proportion of our officers as well as their superior quality.



### VII.—Schools of Instruction.

These are of various descriptions, and are all excellent, but they are not large enough. There is a very common want felt of instructors, both officers and non-commissioned officers. They leave their regiments so rapidly, get promoted, or employed in places where their services as instructors cannot be called for, that a larger supply than at present is desirable.

There is a school of musketry, of field fortification, of signalling, of gymnastics, also one for pioneers, and to these should be added one for drill instructors, as the manner in which recruits are taught has much influence on the rapidity with which they learn, on their after-success in their profession, and in increasing or diminishing the too-common acts of insubordination and desertion at the early period of a soldier's service.

There should be a class for non-commissioned officers at every garrison school, and they should work in conjunction with and under the officers, as their assistants, while surveying, &c.

The proposed arrangement regarding the technical training for sub-lieutenants at Sandhurst is good. The staff college should be enlarged, if possible.

A much larger proportion of University men, having taken their degrees, could with advantage be admitted into the Army. In these cases, at least, we should be free from the objectionable system of "cramming," and the age of admission of all candidates might well be extended to twenty-one or twenty-two.

It would seem preferable that officers should be persuaded to join the Militia from the line, rather than the line from the Militia.

Every officer who passes through a school of instruction, and takes a certificate, should have a letter indicating the same placed after his name in the Army List, showing the class in which he passed.

In the same way it should be indicated who has passed as musketry instructor, and the class of certificate he has taken in field fortification, Army signalling, telegraphy, &c., &c.

### VIII.—Peace Training.

I am in favour of giving our Army, which is necessarily small, a training of the most superior description; but as some may consider such an education unnecessary for British troops, I will here quote a portion of an article which lately appeared in one of our leading military journals:—

"We believe that attention should be directed, not so much to changes of system, either great or small, as to corresponding improvements in the means of instruction provided for the Army. We all recognise the advantages of education in every pursuit in life; and have little reason to doubt that, in the case of soldiers, whenever any exceptional success has been gained, it will be found, on examination, that the troops which composed the Army that gained the success had previously been subjected, either by accident or design, to a more severe course of instruction and training than was usual at the time."

If our men are to serve with the Regular Army for only three years, it will undoubtedly be necessary to pay more attention than hitherto to their technical training.

The drill, as contained in the field exercise, should be more systematically taught; more attention paid to Part IV. (brigade drill), which should be carried out regimentally by brigades of rope battalions or otherwise; Part V. (picquet duty) should be explained more in detail to individual soldiers, until each man very thoroughly understands *the object* of all the varied duties of an outpost or a picquet. The construction of shelter trenches, and strengthening their post with the aid of the spade, the pickaxe, &c., should be carefully taught in connection with Part V.

It should not be considered sufficient to teach these things to the soldiers and then leave them; they must be continually practised at them until the whole are indelibly impressed on the mind, and all movements made, not after thought, but intuitively. It is this mechanical way of moving that renders Regular troops so valuable in the confusion and noise of action, and it is this which constitutes in a great measure their superiority over troops less trained.

Rifle drill and practice should be carried out as thoroughly and systematically as at present, but it need not be so arranged as *unnecessarily* to interfere with the other instructions of a battalion.

Troops should be taught by rule to form their camp and pitch their tents, to hut themselves, to construct camp kitchens, and cook in the open air. They should all go through a course of gymnastics, and all learn to swim. They should be instructed systematically in the use of the spade, in cutting turf, throwing up small field works, making rifle pits,\* &c.

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\* Had our Infantry been able to do this in the Crimea, our losses would not have been so heavy.

Besides this, they should learn the exercises for working and mounting heavy ordnance, and should be able to construct spar bridges; and no recruit should be dismissed drill until he has passed a satisfactory examination in all these, the learning of which, if well taught, will probably occupy from ten to fourteen months.

It is laid down in our regulations that these things shall be taught to our Army, but we are not provided with the means, though some of them, it is true, are to be found in a few stations in the kingdom.

The expense of providing means at all headquarter stations would be little more than nominal; but without them our short service men would return to the country, if they had chanced to be quartered in certain places, with scarcely any experience on many practical points.

We are possessed of large numbers of tents, cooking and camping utensils, &c.; they are used by the Militia for twenty-eight days in the year, and kept mouldering in the control store for the rest. Every commanding officer should be empowered to draw a full supply of these tents, camp equipage, &c., for his corps at any time when not in use by the auxiliary forces. He should march his regiment out, encamp, and manœuvre it at a distance of two or three days' journey from its barracks. He should be furnished, on application, with sufficient carts for his purpose, the cost of which should not exceed £25 per regiment per annum.

This camping out should be encouraged as much as possible, and every facility should be given to the commanding officer to give his battalion the advantage of this additional instruction.

When regiments have been thus practised, let them meet and be brigaded under a general and his staff, with control officers to supply food and forage.

It is also undoubtedly desirable, indeed necessary, that regiments should have six weeks' training every three years, in brigade or division, on ground similar to that round Aldershot, from a standing camp.

Autumn manœuvres, though excellent, are very expensive, and the greater benefit derived from them over that of the standing camp is more by the general officers, staff, and commissariat, than by the regimental officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers, on whose individual knowledge so much more now depends than in former years.

But a regiment should attend an autumn manœuvre at least

every four or five years, *i.e.*, twice or three times in a soldier's service of twelve years.

On these occasions both the men of the Army Reserve and of the Militia Reserve of the brigade should attend in such proportion that a Militia Reserve man be present at one, and an Army Reserve man at two, during their respective services of six and nine years. A certain number of Militia officers should accompany their men, and battalions should be formed as already described.

For at least the first fortnight the Reserve should drill regimentally with the Regular corps, and no Militia Reserve man should be permitted to be present until he has been through at least one training.

The uniform of the Regular regiment would be issued to all the Reserve men, taken into store at the termination of the manœuvres, and from time to time served out to recruits as they join.

The brass numerals on the shoulder should be those of their old corps in the case of men of the Army Reserve, and of the Militia those of their Militia regiment; they should be worn in conjunction with the number of the brigade.

Each man (Regular or Reserve) should be provided with a canvas frock to preserve his uniform when out, the same being returned to store when the camp is broken up.

The cost of providing all that is necessary to carry out the foregoing instructions may be roughly estimated at three or four thousand pounds for the whole kingdom, not including autumn manœuvres, as follows:—

There are in our arsenals sufficient old pieces of ordnance available; the cost of moving them would be but little, and a few pounds would erect light platforms for them where necessary.\*

In many places there is waste land, the property of Government, suitable for entrenching and field works, and where such does not exist, possibly an acre or two might be bought within a short distance of barracks for a moderate sum, or hired for less. Considerable tracts of land for manœuvring regiments would generally have to be reached with tents by means of carts and marching. £50 would probably cover the cost of planks, &c., for instruction in hutting and use in the construction of spar bridges at each headquarter station. £50 more would erect a

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\* A force scarcely ever takes the field without requiring Infantry to perform, to some extent, the duties of Artillery.

regimental gymnasium. To convert an old shed into a modelling house for the purpose of giving preliminary instructions in field fortification, and to provide a few foils, masks, and singlesticks for the use of the officers and non-commissioned officers, as is the wish of H.R.H. Commanding-in-Chief, expressed in a recent general order, £20 more might be allowed; and as a barrack-room would be used for the purpose of a fencing-room, no expense would on that account\* be entailed.

The greatest importance must be attached to guard and sentry duty; after four months' drill the recruits should be put twice or three times on guard as supernumerary, each with a trusted old soldier to direct him. Before mounting they should have been well taught the theory by the drill-instructor, and after that they should take about one guard each week, so arranged as to interfere as little as possible with the course of instruction.

Every non-commissioned officer and soldier for drill and fatigue purposes should be provided with a loose, light, canvas Norfolk jacket, tanned of a red-brown colour, similar in shade to the canvas leggings so generally worn by sportsmen; this should be put on over their regimentals to save them from being discoloured by dirt or wet. The haversacks should be of the same shade.

### Conclusion.

The scope of this essay, as proposed by the Council of the Royal United Service Institution, is such that, in the limited space allowed, it would be quite impossible to consider in sufficient detail all the different branches of the service. I have, therefore, up to the present, written only on Infantry of the line—the main branch—as what can be urged regarding it is, with but slight modification of detail, equally applicable to the other two branches.

Having carefully gone into every detail in connection with the Infantry of the line, it is my duty, before leaving the subject, to apply it as far as possible to the whole of our military forces.

Our present Regular Army at home is composed of 50,000 Infantry of the line, and 49,000 of all other arms, making a total of 99,000 men.

To this number I propose adding 11,000 Regular Infantry, and an Infantry Army Reserve of 56,000 more.

Allowing that the other arms of the service (49,000), when organised on the system I propose, are able to form a Reserve

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\* All regiments have now trained instructing officers and sergeants in gymnastics, fortification, &c., &c., as well as musketry.

at least half as numerous in proportion as the Infantry—say 24,000—we shall then have 110,000 Regulars and 80,000 Army Reserve, the whole being completed with 49,000 Militia Reserve; total, 239,000\* non-commissioned officers, rank and file, and 1000 Reserve officers.

The following comparative abstract, the items of which are taken from the Army Estimates of the current year, will show more plainly the numbers of our present force and of that which it is here proposed to form, with the comparative cost of each.

COMPARATIVE ABSTRACT.

ARMY OF 1874-75 (NOT INCLUDING INDIAN ARMY).

|   |   |                  |
|---|---|------------------|
| 99,000 Regulars at home . . . . .                 | } | £4,752,000       |
| (16,000) Ditto in the Colonies . . . . .          |   |                  |
| 10,000 Army Reserve . . . . .                     |   | 66,000           |
| 27,000 Militia do., Infantry and Rifles . . . . . | } | 30,000           |
| 3,000 Do. do., Artillery . . . . .                |   |                  |
| <hr/> 139,000 + 16,000 in the Colonies.           |   | <hr/> £4,848,000 |

PROPOSED ARMY WHEN IN FULL OPERATION (NOT INCLUDING INDIAN REGIMENTS).

|   |   |                   |
|---|---|-------------------|
| 99,000 Regulars at home . . . . .   | } | £4,557,000        |
| (16,000) Ditto in the Colonies, after deducting £195,000 saved on line depots . . . . . |   |                   |
| 11,000 Additional Regulars, pay and subsistence at 2s. . . . .                          |   | 401,000           |
| 80,000 Army Reserve, as per this year's rate . . . . .                                  |   | 528,000           |
| 44,000 Militia do., Infantry . . . . .  | } | 49,000            |
| 5,000 Do. do., Artillery . . . . .  |   |                   |
| (1,000) A Reserve of officers . . . . .   |   | 100,000           |
| <u>239,000 + 16,000 in Colonies, and 1,000 Reserve officers.</u>                        |   | <u>£5,635,000</u> |

From this deduct savings under following heads:—

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| Enrolled pensioners (II. Class Army Reserve). . . . .      | £37,000           |
| Saved on pensions, superannuated allowance, &c., . . . . . | 1,000,000         |
| Half amount good conduct pay . . . . .                     | 68,000            |
| Deduct . . . . .   | <u>£1,105,000</u> |
| Annual cost of proposed Army . . . . .                     | £4,530,000        |
| Cost of Army of 1874-75 . . . . .                          | 4,848,000         |
| Ultimate saving . . . . .                                  | <u>£318,000</u>   |

\*The numbers here given do not include officers of departments, as they remain unchanged, except the addition of 1000 Reserve officers.

|   |     |     |     |   |   |   |   |                |
|---|-----|-----|-----|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| Present force at home available to serve abroad in time of war, not including those stationed in the Colonies, and not including officers . . . . . |     |     |     |   |   |   |   | 139,000        |
| Proposed  | do. | do. | do. | . | . | . | . | 239,000        |
| Additional force . . . . .  |     |     |     |   |   |   |   | <u>100,000</u> |

The figures in the foregoing abstract do not in any way show the total cost of the two Armies, but they exhibit the increase and decrease of men and money consequent on the changes proposed in the essay, viz., 100,000 additional men, 1000 more officers, at about £300,000 less per annum. The following explanations, however, will be useful.

The total includes the pay of 1000 Reserve officers, but not their numbers.

As the cost of subsistence, clothing, &c., of the 99,000 men at home, 16,000 in the Colonies, and the Militia is taken into consideration in the year's estimates, and remains unchanged, it is not entered here; but, as the cost of subsistence, pay, clothing, &c., of the additional 11,000 is not there included, it must be entered in this abstract.

The Reserve of officers I propose would, on the ordinary rate of half-pay, cost £90,000, but, in their case, the pay should be greater. Full pay would be £148,000. As many will be employed receiving pay from other sources, the sum of £100,000 would be amply sufficient to pay those that remain unprovided for.

I have not counted the number of the enrolled pensioners either in the present Army or in the proposed one, because they are unavailable for service abroad in time of war, but I have taken credit for their present cost, as hereafter it will be saved to the country.

The natural consequence of the reduction in the length of service of the men will be a corresponding reduction in the amount of good conduct pay which, taken at about half of the estimates for this year, would amount to £68,000.

The Militia Reserve I have taken at £1 per annum, being the additional sum paid annually to each man who expresses his willingness to join the Regular Army in time of war.

The slight additional pay of officers and non-commissioned officers which I propose would have to be taken from the total saving.

As far as is possible to calculate, the maximum number of recruits annually required for such an Army as here estimated,

allowing for desertions, &c., will be 27,000 to 28,000. In 1870 and in 1871, when the Army was augmented suddenly, an average of 24,000 each year was obtained, and, with a short term of enlistment of three years, there can be little doubt that the necessary quota will be forthcoming.

At first sight it will perhaps be thought that barrack accommodation in the Kingdom must be increased to admit of regiments of the foregoing strength being housed; but it may not be generally known that, with few exceptions, the room of from 200 to 300 men in nearly every barracks is occupied by the families of married soldiers.

If a small portion of the money which will be required for building barracks at depot centres to fit them for the reception of the line depots were applied to the building of these quarters, ample space would be available in most barracks. In some places it might be necessary to build, in which case the necessary additions would only be rooms of the simplest description for private soldiers.

But let us consider the erection of barracks at brigade centres for line depots now in progress. First, the ground in most cases must be procured at great cost, and then, if only the quarters for a few old soldiers and recruits were required, the amount would be trifling; but, in addition to this, there are quarters to be provided for officers, costly mess premises, consisting of mess rooms, ante-rooms, kitchens, messman's and mess-sergeant's quarters, also sergeants' messes, canteens and canteen-sergeant's quarters, reading rooms, recreation rooms, school rooms, cells, cooks' houses, wash-houses, orderly rooms, hospitals, ball courts, married soldier's quarters, &c., &c.; and there must be for these canteen-sergeants, schoolmasters, hospital-sergeants, hospital-orderlies, with barrack-sergeants, &c., &c., all receiving extra pay.

At least sixty out of every seventy of all these subsidiary buildings and supernumerary sergeants, &c., &c., might be dispensed with.

Without line depots the depot centres require little besides a store and quarters for the colonel and quartermaster, if these cannot be hired in the vicinity, which would be preferable. The Militia staff, &c., are for the most part already accommodated.

I do not know exactly the amount that would be saved by this arrangement, but it might, I believe, be approximately placed at two millions.

This large sum unexpended on erecting barracks and their subsidiary buildings for line depots at depot centres might be



saved to the national exchequer, after deducting therefrom the small amount required for improvement to existing barracks recommended in the foregoing.

To sum up shortly, the main propositions which I have endeavoured to establish (if my calculations are correct, and they have been arrived at after much careful thought) are:—

An increase to the available national force of something like 100,000 men.

An immediate saving on buildings of about two millions.

A further saving to the exchequer of over £300,000 per annum.

The acquisition of an Army not only large, but intelligent and highly trained.

An ample provision for Indian and Colonial service.

The creation of a powerful and effective Reserve.

The maintenance and expansion as to efficiency of the Militia and Volunteer forces.

All this while taking from the labour market of the country only a minimum of able-bodied men.

I would strongly urge that the oft-mooted proposition regarding the furnishing of officers' barrack rooms be carried out at once, and the money for this purpose taken from the sum proposed to be saved on depot centre barracks.

In addition to the table, two chairs, fender, fire-irons, and coal-scuttle, the only furniture provided according to present rules, there might be an iron bedstead, a wash-hand stand, jug, basin, &c., a bath, water-can, and chest of drawers, the cost of which would not exceed from Forty to Fifty thousand pounds for the whole Army at home.

Officers would gladly pay ten, fifteen, or even twenty per cent. for this boon, and regimental baggage on the line of march would be much reduced.

Mess rooms should be treated in a similar way; but carpets, curtains, bedding, and such-like should on no account be provided.



## APPENDIX II.

### EXTRACTS FROM THE PRESS AT HOME AND ABROAD.

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#### *THE MILITARY RECORD AND VOLUNTEER NEWS.*

GLASGOW, *Wednesday, July 2nd, 1879.*

#### **"Volunteer Efficiency as exemplified in Sham Fights."**

WE have very much pleasure in placing before our readers a report to the adjutant-general of the forces by Colonel J. Sprot, commanding the 47th Sub-District, Kingston-on-Thames, and formerly commanding the 91st, Princess Louise's Argyllshire Highlanders. We have reason to know that Colonel Sprot has ever taken a warm and discerning interest in the Volunteer Force, and the result of the field day on Wimbledon Common on the 24th May last, which was got up chiefly as a test of Volunteer capacity, is most gratifying and encouraging. Colonel Sprot, as an officer commanding a mixed brigade of Regulars, Militia, and Volunteers, deserves the thanks of the community for the pains he has taken to improve and develop the efficiency of the military forces of the country by the care he has evinced in testing, and not finding wanting, the Volunteer battalions, the junior troops of Her Majesty's land forces. The document is one which supplies the strongest advocacy of the efficacy of Volunteer field days and sham fights, and we hope the War Authorities may yet be induced to recommend that funds be forthcoming for defraying the expenses of field days, such as that so favourably reported on by a zealous and appreciative officer. In acknowledging the receipt of the report, the lieutenant-general commanding the Home District expressed much gratification at the satisfactory nature of its terms; and it is gratifying to be able to point to such a judgment as it contains as an antidote to much of the cold-shouldering the Volunteers are sometimes in the habit of receiving from certain depreciative individuals, who hold their noses in the air, and affect to sneer at these Volunteers.

## COPY OF REPORT.

*From* Colonel Sprot, Commanding 47th, G.D.B.,  
*To* The Assistant-Adjutant-General, Horse Guards,  
Whitehall, S.W.

KINGSTON, 26th May 1879.

SIR,—I have the honour to forward you a report on the brigade field day held on Saturday, 24th inst., Her Majesty's Birthday, on Wimbledon Common, at which were present about 2000 Surrey R.V., clothed in dark green or black, and about 500 brigade depot and Militia recruits clothed in red.

The field day was, in my opinion, especially interesting, and the performances of the troops most satisfactory.

For many years past it has been my practice at such parades to endeavour to carry on instruction in as practical a manner as possible, and to bring the troops as far as we are able up to the desired end of all military training, viz.—a sufficient individual knowledge of tactics to ensure a successful termination to their battle.

With Volunteers this species of instruction seems especially desirable, because being nearly always, when exercising, under the eye of a criticising public, they are naturally more disposed to repeat over and over again those movements which they are aware they understand most thoroughly, than to advancing into others where naturally at first mistakes will certainly occur.

Last year, before the Queen's Birthday parade, on stating it to be my intention to practice the "attack," it was suggested that Volunteers had not sufficient drill, that they would be unsteady, get out of hand, and that accidents would happen.

Of what use would such troops be in time of trouble? I therefore determined to put the matter to a practised test, gave adjutants of corps full instructions how to proceed, and directed them to communicate all I had said to their colonels, officers, and men.

The field day came off, the men were perfectly steady throughout, and there were no accidents, yet they advanced for half-an-hour in the dusk of the evening over nearly a mile of ground. The method of advance, however, was imperfectly understood. There was too much shouting, too much bugling, and too much galloping about with orders, where none should have been necessary, and where in war none could have been given.

In the springtime of this year I published a circular specially for the instruction of the auxiliary forces of the sub-district, who

have so little time for drill, and in it dwelt a good deal on the drill of attack. This paper has been well ventilated in the Volunteer newspapers, and has been read much, it is said, by the officers and men of the sub-district.

This May I determined to put the drill of these forces to a still more severe trial than last. An unusually large amount of ammunition was ordered to be issued, part to be carried in the pouches and part to be distributed on the field.

Now, it is clear that in the drill hall or barrack square, where all is still and the voice of the commanding officer alone heard, there can be no difficulty in moving troops with steadiness and precision. But what will take place in the roar of battle where no word of command can be heard?

It was to test this that the field day of Saturday was planned.

The difficulties to be overcome were much greater than I had anticipated, and the result surpassed my most sanguine expectations.

The division was divided into two brigades, the red and the black, the former to be used as defenders of a position which the latter was to attack.

The brigade having assembled—after deploying into line—royal salute—three cheers for the Queen—march past—and a few simple manoeuvres, which it was difficult to execute in consequence of the dense crowd of spectators who covered the common. When the red brigade had taken up its position, the black “formed for attack.”

It advanced some distance in this formation, when the order to commence fire was given. The line laid down, and then advanced by rushes of alternate companies. It was impossible to see the troops from the crowds of people in their rear; it was impossible to hear the words of command from the deafening roar of musketry, yet, whatever part of the line I rode into I found it always steadily advancing, and carefully firing, without the smallest confusion; indeed, the whole line was controlled as easily with the assistance of one mounted A.D.C. and one bugler as if it had not consisted of more than 50 men. Clearly every Volunteer there knew his duty, where to go, and what to do, without being told.

I cannot speak too highly of the behaviour of these excellent troops. Notwithstanding the exceedingly trying position they were placed in, not a soldier was ever out of his place, nor was there at any time the smallest disorder.

In conclusion, I must give it as my opinion after what I saw on the Queen's Birthday, that the four regiments of Surrey Rifle

Volunteers which took part in the field day would, after a week or two at Aldershot, be perfectly fit to take the field, go anywhere, and do everything that might be required of Regular soldiers.

The red brigade performed its role equally well, and the Militia recruits, who have only been up a few weeks, deserve the highest credit for the manner in which they went through the parade.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient Servant,

J. SPROT, *Colonel,*  
*Commanding 47th Sub-District Brigade.*

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### NEW YORK ARMY AND NAVY JOURNAL.

*August 16th, 1879.*

#### The National Guard.

*Practical Instruction for the National Guard.*—Those familiar with the internal history of the National Guard are fully aware of the great improvements that has taken place since the war, and especially within the last five years. Most of those organisations, whose inefficiency formerly brought the very term of National Guardsman into contempt, have been disbanded, a proper system of reports and correspondence established, the inspectors made efficient, and the general discipline immensely improved. The standard of drill is much higher, and the introduction of rifle practice has made a National Guard regiment a formidable opponent.

Yet, while congratulating ourselves upon what has been attained, we must not forget how much is required before we can consider our National Guard organisations really efficient. Is there a single regiment or a single company that is in that condition? Perhaps there may be a few companies, such, for example, as Co. 1, 7th Regiment (Capt. Casey), and one or two others, who know something about skirmishing and field duty. But is that not all? Is there a single regiment in the State that has ever been drilled in anything but the mechanical manœuvres of formal battalion drill, which, while valuable to make the men steady and amenable to orders, never could be practised in these days of loose formation? Is there one of them that knows anything about marching or skirmishing—as soldiers have to march and skirmish—or that could

pass in line over a rough country, or, above all, "make an attack in loose order" (the culminating point of all their training) without falling into the most dire confusion? How many quartermasters or captains are there who know how to draw a day's ration for a company, and how many of their colonels can teach them? How many commanding officers are there who, if they were ordered to march their commands 20 miles through an enemy's country, would know how to set about it, or could bring their men in fresh and in good order? The recent discussion in the *Army and Navy Journal* shows the attention which these subjects are receiving among the progressive spirits of the National Guard. They have a strong resemblance to the similar discussion in the same paper which culminated in the formation of the National Rifle Association and rifle practice in general, and, if pushed with the same zeal as that was pushed, will have a similar success.

To those officers who are familiar with the instructions of other organisations of a similar character, that of our National Guard seems very inferior. Look for example at the English Volunteers. Not long since it was proposed in Liverpool to celebrate the Queen's Birthday by a "march past" (*i.e.*, street parade) of the Volunteers of the city, some 6000 men; in other words, by just such a parade as the 1st Division confines itself to making. Yet many officers and the Liverpool press generally objected strenuously on the ground that Volunteers should not be called out to perform such an empty ceremony, from which no instruction or benefit could be derived, even to honour the Queen. We daily find regiment after regiment "marching out," *i.e.*, marching 10 to 15 miles in the country, with all the formalities of actual service, invariably winding up by an "attack in loose formation." This drill is continued often till dark, and the regiment then goes into camp and returns the next morning, unless the next day is devoted to similar instruction. In nine cases out of ten the marching and drill takes place in a heavy rain, to which no attention whatever appears to be paid. In addition to such exercises, officers and men seek opportunity of uniting with the Regulars in their camp of instruction, and manœuvres, in which Volunteer and Regular regiments are united, are common.

The report of Colonel Sprot, commanding 47th Sub-District (composed of 2000 Surrey Volunteers and 500 Militia), states that having noticed that Volunteers, knowing they are criticised when drilling, are disposed to repeat those movements which they understand rather than to undertake new ones, he determined to practice them in the attack. He therefore published a circular describing

the details, which was read by both officers and men some time before the last field day. When this took place, the brigade was divided, half making the attack upon the remainder. Both were plentifully supplied with ammunition, "with the intention of accustoming them to manœuvre in the roar of battle when commands are indistinguishable."

He reports:—"The line laid down and then advanced by alternate rushes by companies. It was impossible to hear the words of command from the deafening roar of musketry, yet whatever part of the line I rode into I found it always steadily advancing and carefully firing without the smallest confusion. Indeed, the whole line was controlled as easily, with the assistance of one A.D.C. and one bugler, as if it had not consisted of more than 50 men. . . . In conclusion, I give it as my opinion . . . that these four regiments of Volunteers, after a week or two at Aldershot, are perfectly fit to take the field, to go anywhere, and do everything that might be required of Regular soldiers."

Is there anyone who could expect a similar report from a Regular officer in relation to any of our National Guard regiments? And yet, why should they not be as efficient as English Volunteers?

All that is wanted is for some commanding officer to break away from the beaten track and take up the matter as Colonel Sprot's report shows he has done. Who will be the man?

G. W. W.

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### VOLUNTEER SERVICE GAZETTE.

September 6th, 1879.

In a recent number of the *New York Army and Navy Journal* a correspondent takes a somewhat desponding view of the existing condition of the National Guard of the State, a force which, in all essentials, answers to our Volunteers. He admits that great improvements have been effected within the last five years by the disbandment of those corps "whose inefficiency formerly brought the very term of National Guardsmen into contempt," by the establishment of a proper system of reports and correspondence, by the appointment of competent inspectors, and by the great improvement of general discipline. But he affirms that much still remains to be done. He asks whether there are more than a few companies who know anything about skirmishing and field duty.

"Is there," he goes on, "a single regiment in the State that has ever been drilled in anything but the mechanical manœuvres of formal battalion drill, which, while valuable to make the men steady and amenable to orders, never could be practised in these days of loose formation? Is there one of them that knows anything about marching or skirmishing—as soldiers have to march and skirmish—or that could pass in line over a rough country, or, above all, make 'an attack in loose order' (the culminating point of all their training) without falling into the most dire confusion? How many quartermasters or captains are there who know how to draw a day's ration for a company, and how many of their colonels can teach them? How many commanding officers are there who, if they were ordered to march their commands 20 miles through an enemy's country, would know how to set about it, or could bring their men in fresh and in good order? Even some of those regiments which go into camp learn, it seems, but little." The writer instances one in which, although the rifle practice was completed, and some instruction in guard duty was imparted, the whole of the rest of the time under canvas was taken up by guard-mounting, dress parade, "and, above all, by the everlasting reviews which were 'tendered' to every general officer who came upon the ground, one of whom regularly appeared every afternoon." The writer admits that there are two sides to the question, and that "when the members of a regiment bear the whole or the larger portion of the expenses of a camp, besides their own time, they naturally expect to enjoy themselves, and must be allowed a reasonable latitude. Besides, a certain amount of 'fuss and feathers' attracts the public, and helps recruiting." But he proceeds to argue that the majority of the National Guardsmen like to be treated as soldiers, and would like an innovation which would teach them a soldier's duties. "Who," he asks, "will substitute practical military instruction for 'show drill'?" Then the writer institutes a comparison between the training of the English Volunteers and those of the United States, much to the advantage of the former. In England, he points out:—

"We daily find regiment after regiment 'marching out,' i.e., marching 10 to 15 miles into the country, with all the formalities of actual service, invariably winding up with an 'attack in loose formation.' This drill is continued often till dark, and the regiment then goes into camp, and returns the next morning, unless the day is devoted to similar instruction. In nine cases out of ten the marching and drill take place in heavy rain, to which no attention whatever is paid. In addition to such exer-



cises, officers and men seek opportunity of uniting with the Regulars in their camp of instruction, and manœuvres, in which Volunteer and Regular regiments are united, are common."

And then, after giving an extract from the well-known report of Colonel Sprot on the Brigade Field Day at Wimbledon on the Queen's Birthday, in which that officer said that the four regiments of Surrey Volunteers then present would be, after a week or two at Aldershot, perfectly fit to take the field, to go anywhere, and do everything that might be required of Regular soldiers, the American writer concludes as follows:—

"Is there anyone who could expect a similar report from a Regular officer in relation to any of our National Guard regiments? And yet, why should they not be as efficient as English Volunteers? All that is wanted is for some commanding officer to break away from the beaten track and take up the matter, as Colonel Sprot's report shows he has done. Who will be the man?"

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### THE DAILY TELEGRAPH.

*November 23rd, 1880.*

Looking at the augmented numbers and steadfast purpose of our auxiliary Army, it is impossible not to discern the serious responsibility that rests upon the War Office and the Horse Guards with respect to it.

The entire history of the force shows that, in so far as it is not an efficient and really formidable weapon for the defence of the heart of this great Empire, the authorities are alone to blame. The Volunteers and their self-sacrificing officers—how self-sacrificing few but themselves know—are ready and willing, nay, anxious, to qualify for all that may become soldiers. Yet we do not hesitate to declare that such qualification is denied them, and that this state of things is largely the result of laxity in carrying out regulations which, however well they may read and sound, are practically not worth the outlay necessary to print them. We desire that special attention should be directed to this matter, since, if provision has already been made for greater efficiency than the Volunteer Force can now boast, it is to the public interest that advantage should be taken of it.

A few years ago every Volunteer regiment was affiliated with one or other of the brigade depots, and placed under the officer commanding, not only for routine purposes, but for instruction,

exception being made in the case of metropolitan corps, which, owing to their number, became connected in brigade with the regiments of Guards.

The admirable idea was that the colonels commanding at the depots and the colonels of the Guards would take every opportunity of assembling the auxiliary regiments, and working them in association with the Regulars for the purpose of that higher instruction which cannot be given in the barrack yard. Nevertheless, with almost unanimity, the officers in question ignored their duties, and at length a circular was issued calling attention to the fact that the Volunteer regiment formed an integral part of their command, and should be treated accordingly. It says little for the spirit and patriotism existing in high military circles that the regulation, authority's warning voice notwithstanding, remains almost as much a dead letter as it ever was. To this rule, let us hasten to say, there are and have been a few brilliant exceptions. During his command of the Scots Guards Lord Abinger was, in more than name, the brigadier of the corps connected with his regiment, nor did he hesitate to manœuvre Guards and Volunteers on Wimbledon Common, though only one officer per company of the Household troops, and he a subaltern, failed to excuse himself from attending; or to march at the head of his brigade through London, although the Guards' Club ostentatiously drew its blinds that the offence might not be seen from the windows. In like manner did Colonel Sprot and one or two other officers distinguish themselves, earning the cordial thanks and enthusiastic admiration of every Volunteer who profited by their teachings.

But the depot commanders have, as a rule, neglected their duties, and set at defiance the voice of authority.



## APPENDIX III.

### ON SHORT SERVICE AND DIVISION DEPOTS.

A proposed substitute for BRIGADE DEPOTS, which it is hoped will remove most of the difficulties that beset the Short Service system lately introduced into our Army.

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#### INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

ON calmly reviewing what has passed in our Army during the last decade, and considering all that has been learned during that time, at home and abroad, in Army organisation, it appears impossible that any Parliament will ever sanction a return to the expensive system of long service with pension; and it is hoped in the following pages to show to the unbiassed reader that, not only is it desirable to continue short service, forming Reserves, but that the present term of six years should be still further shortened, and Reserves still further increased.

This can be done, not only without injury to the officers and non-commissioned officers, but greatly to their benefit, and to the advantage of the country generally, by adopting the proposals herein set forth.

The objections usually urged do not appear to weigh against short service itself, but rather against the method of carrying it out. The subject will be found here, classed under five heads, as follows:—

- I. The working of short service as it affects the officers and non-commissioned officers of the Regular Army, to which is added a Note on “How to obtain good non-commissioned officers.”
- II. A defence of our young soldiers (*who have had to bear the odium of the new system*).
  - (a) In peace.
  - (b) In war.
- III. Consideration of proposals—
  - (a) To increase the present length of short service, and return to long service with pension.
  - (b) To re-establish the old four-company depots.

IV. Is a scheme for the establishing of "Division (*or District*) Depots" instead of brigade depots, designed to improve the working of the short service system, which scheme it is hoped will overcome most of the existing objections and difficulties.

V. Consideration of objections that may be offered to the proposed scheme.

(a) Too small a leaven of old soldiers.

(b) The desire of intending recruits to join particular regiments.

### I.

#### WORKING OF SHORT SERVICE AS IT AFFECTS THE OFFICERS AND NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS OF THE REGULAR ARMY.

It has so come about that, in the working of the short service system, the interests of the officers are frequently antagonistic to those of the community, and hence it is that so much has been heard of late from officers of all ranks and ages against the system.

A careful observer cannot fail to see that the officers of the Army have much to complain of from the late changes, while, on the other hand, the public have much to be satisfied with, and appear reluctant to give way to those who desire to revert to the old, but more comfortable, state of affairs.

Some of the inconveniences from which the officers suffer may be enumerated as follows:—

1. Because they receive the greatest praise from inspecting generals and the public, they desire to have in their regiments the largest possible number of handsome, tall, showy men, and they are anxious to retain these with the colours as long as possible, to enable them to be drilled to perform their mechanical movements with an exactitude the necessity for which is questionable. This cannot be had with a system of short service.

2. Now that a door has been opened through the Reserve, by which those soldiers who choose can re-enter civil life, where they receive higher pay, are able to marry without asking the permission of the officers, and, though still soldiers, are free from the irksome duties of a garrison life, a considerable portion of the most intelligent have quitted the colours. Few of those who remain are suited properly to fill the posts of non-commissioned officers and servants, and, as the comfort of the officers greatly depends upon this, they must naturally be opposed to the system which causes it.

3. When regiments are suddenly ordered abroad, and have their establishments augmented, it has become more than ever a custom to call for volunteers from other regiments. The officers of the corps from which the men are taken object to have good soldiers whom they have trained and disciplined taken from them, and though they cannot entirely blame short service for the system, it has been the cause of increasing its unpopularity.

But not only do the officers who give, object, but those who receive, volunteers have good reason to complain, for it is a fact beyond doubt, that, while pressure is put upon the good soldier to induce him to remain, it is even more frequently put upon the bad one to induce him to accept the bounty; the consequence being that augmented regiments have sometimes thrust upon them men of the worst character.

4. On account of short service and the linked battalion system, a regiment has now to drill and discipline five or six times as many recruits as formerly, and, when trained, one-half, and those the best, are transferred to the sister battalion. This also is much disliked by officers and non-commissioned officers.

5. Then the greater number of recruits in a regiment, the greater the proportion of deserters, and the greater the pecuniary loss to officers commanding companies. In this, short service touches their pockets.

All these undoubted grievances they may fairly lay to the charge of short service. Can it be wondered then if all regimental officers and non-commissioned officers give their testimony against it?

On the other hand the public have gained immensely; they have a more numerous, a better instructed, and a cheaper Army than formerly. They will have large Reserves of well-drilled soldiers, healthy, strong, and of sufficient age, ready in time of war. They will save greatly in pensions, that are neither asked for nor required by the soldiers, and they will also save largely in the matter of bounties which would otherwise then be given for recruits.

The soldiers themselves are better paid and better treated than formerly, and are freer men than they were, besides those who deserve it are not forbidden to serve on for pension.

This remark applies also to the non-commissioned officers in a still greater degree.

But the officers have had little done for them since the introduction of short service to encourage them to carry out the wishes of the country. Purchase, which they liked so much, has been abolished, and, though it may be true that some may now retire

on a pension, such retirement is always more or less forced, and frequently operates most detrimentally on them.

There is a Committee now sitting at the War Office on these matters, and it is probable they will consider how such grievances can be removed; and they may also consider whether the time has not arrived when something should be done for the officers, for it seems clear that so long as the system of short service continues to affect them adversely in so many particulars, so long will they (naturally guided more or less by self-interest) continue to be found in opposition to it.

No doubt remedies can be found for these inconveniences, and the following are given as likely to prove efficacious.

For the first, check the desire for fine showy old soldiers who are retained in the service for long periods, at great expense of pay and pension, to perform with unnecessary accuracy, mechanical movements, by desiring inspecting generals to accord small praise for such qualifications no longer required. Let men be complimented for their individual intelligence, for good marching, and the power to carry a full valise, for general smartness, good shooting, and a knowledge of their profession, for good conduct and high certificates of education, and give regiments credit for the number of men they have with such labour placed on their Reserve List.

For the second complaint, viz., difficulty in obtaining good non-commissioned officers and servants, permit all non-commissioned officers to marry, look still more to their comforts by giving all sergeants separate rooms in barracks, and enlist men specially for N.C.O. rank as detailed farther on.

With reference to the difficulty officers now have in obtaining good servants, alter Queen's Regulations, sec. VII., para. 117, so that the servants in Cavalry receive 1s. and in Infantry 6d. a-day. Practically, an Infantry officer gives his servant 10s. to 12s. a month, and it would not be too much to authorise an increase of 3s. Exempt them from all parades except general inspections, on which occasion they should not join the ranks, but parade apart. Let them be "Out of Mess" if they desire it, and allow them to marry on the understanding that when they cease to be servants they join the Reserve (no "duty men" privates should be married). It is presumed that all servants will have at least three years' service, and be fit to join the Reserve, then the only drills required of them should be those required of the Reserve men. Men in the 1st class Army Reserve should be allowed to rejoin the colours for the purpose of becoming officers' servants, whether married or single, returning to the Reserve when as servants they are no longer

required. These men would serve on for pension, and, being soldiers of the best character, proved useful men, they would more thoroughly deserve such rewards than vast numbers of those who now enjoy them.

To overcome the three remaining difficulties, establish division depots, five or six for the kingdom, each passing 5000 or 6000 recruits annually to the regiments, 20 to 25 in number, which would compose the division. In these depots there would be always ready to hand sufficient men to complete two or three battalions that might be suddenly ordered abroad with well-drilled soldiers of fair age, prepared to serve in any part of the world, and under any circumstances.

Further details of the scheme will be found under the 4th head.

#### NOTE ON

#### HOW TO OBTAIN GOOD NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS.

It appears quite certain that the Army cannot get non-commissioned officers sufficiently good, and in sufficient numbers, from the ranks, and it has now become a necessity to look for them elsewhere.

To enlist men specially for non-commissioned officers would appear a plan likely to bring many educated intelligent youths into the service.

They would be required to produce trustworthy characters; to pass a qualifying educational examination; to serve on probation in the rank of lance-corporal for six or eight months, and pass at the end of that time a professional examination before being confirmed in their appointment. Should they fail, they would be discharged with a protecting certificate, or allowed to enter the ranks.

They would be subjected to the same regulations in regard to promotion and reduction, &c., as the others, except in the event of reduction to the ranks by sentence of court-martial, when they would be permitted a free discharge if applied for within a given time.

The advantage these men would gain over those enlisting as privates would be their being at once brought prominently to the notice of their officers, and immediately commencing their progress up the list of non-commissioned officers. Also, while being in a position to acquire a full and sympathetic knowledge of the private and his duties, they would not be called upon to perform the

drudgery of sweeping out rooms, washing dishes, picking grass, rolling parade grounds, or other menial work.

In regiments where a sufficient number of non-commissioned officers can be obtained, of the class required, from the ranks, this expedient need not be resorted to, because the private soldiers might feel aggrieved; but all those in the ranks desirous of serving on the same terms as the direct non-commissioned officer should be allowed to do so.

The danger of failure lies in the jealousy of the old and uneducated soldiers, and the inferior non-commissioned officers of some standing, who dislike seeing the younger men promoted over their heads, even though they themselves are unfit for preferment. They frequently annoy the young non-commissioned officer, endeavour to detract from his merits, and get him into trouble by methods not too scrupulous, and there is little doubt that in this lies much of the present difficulty in inducing young soldiers to accept the stripe.

By adopting this plan the difficult problem of how to obtain recruits can be eliminated from the still more difficult one of how to obtain good non-commissioned officers, and increased efficiency and economy will be the natural result.

## II.

### A FEW WORDS IN DEFENCE OF OUR YOUNG SOLDIERS.

#### (A) *In Peace.*

Why should our young soldiers be inferior?

The young German can in two years be made a perfect fighting machine. In what is the young Briton so inferior that he cannot be made a good soldier in six, if not in three years? The young German soldier, after being passed into the Reserve, is not annually called out for drill, but, when required to take the field, he is fit to perform any duty. In what lies the inferiority of the young English soldier, that he having joined the Reserve, after six years with the colours, it should be necessary to have him out for practice every year as is contemplated?

It is true that conscription brings to the ranks many educated men of greater intellect than is obtainable by voluntary enlistment; but neither high education nor great intellect is required to master the duties of a private soldier, and by far the greater number of German conscripts are as little intellectual as our own recruits. This, therefore, cannot be urged as a reason for taking so much less time to make a German than an English soldier.



The young English soldier is continually being blamed; is it not time to consider how much blame should be attached to him, and how much to the machinery for, and method of, teaching him?

Can it be that recruits are not thoroughly taught, and that they are left to find out too much for themselves, or have to learn by experience in many years the duties they should be taught in a few months?

Are our regiments of sufficient numerical strength to carry on military instructions really well?

Are they always provided with the necessary appliances?

Are our drill grounds always sufficiently large?

Are our non-commissioned officers sufficiently educated professionally to instruct the soldiers in their more advanced duties?

Do our garrison duties of guards and fatigues not greatly interfere with the recruits' training?

How many hours weekly are devoted to actual military instruction by each soldier, apart from the large amount of time spent on parades, inspections, guards, fatigues, barrack and belt cleaning, &c.?

The most superficial observer who is unbiassed can see that short service, to form Reserves, must inevitably be retained. Is it not better then to seek for some mode of more quickly turning the recruits into serviceable soldiers, than endeavour to find reasons why they should be so much longer retained in the ranks, and the Reserves thereby reduced in number?

A soldier with the colours costs the country 2s. 6d. a-day, one with the Reserve 6d. In round numbers therefore, 1100 soldiers on the old system will cost daily £137, 10s., but on the short service system, enlisting for three years' Army and nine years' Reserve service, double that number can be obtained for the same money. Take a regiment 800 strong, one fourth of which is allowed to continue on the old rules, they will, after deducting 400 for casuals, form a Reserve of 1400 men, ranging from three to twelve years' service, and will come to 800 with the colours, £100; 1400 Reserve, £35; total, 2200 for £135, 2000 of whom will be over a year's service.

The cost of these regiments will be precisely the same in the first instance, but the larger will be the cheaper in the end, having but half the number of pensioners to provide for. There can be no doubt as to which is the most desirable.

#### (B) *In War.*

Talking of boy soldiers being unsteady before the enemy; it must be admitted that instances are not wanting of even the

best soldiers having been occasionally panic-stricken, but it is unjust now that short service has been introduced to throw the blame specially on the young soldiers.

Boys followed the Duke over the Pyrenees, boys fought and won the battle of Waterloo, and many of our ancient battles. When indeed has our Army in the field not been composed principally of boys after the first twelvemonths' war.

Sir Evelyn Wood in a recent speech said, "Look at the Victoria Cross List, and you will see those who wore that decoration earned it for the most part when they were boys."

Sir Garnet Wolseley, in a dispatch lately received from South Africa, writes, "Her Majesty's young soldiers fought excellently, in every way quite equal to their older comrades."

From the Cape we read of young soldiers giving unnecessary alarms, but who can tell that these alarms were always unnecessary? how often may they not have saved the camp from surprise, by showing that the troops were on the alert?

If the regiments sent from England in the spring did not quite come up to the older ones that had been in the Colonies for some time in steadiness and usefulness, may not this have arisen from their having had injected into their ranks, only a few days before sailing, a number of men, nearly doubling those in the original regiment, half trained and of indifferent, if not positively bad, characters, elbowed out of half the corps in the kingdom?

### III.

#### CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS.

(A) *To increase the present length of Short Service, and to return to Long Service and Pension.*

It has recently been proposed to increase the short service of soldiers to eight years with the colours and eight with the Reserve, and encourage them to complete twenty-one years' service and receive a pension.

The unquestionable object of such a proposal is to have with the colours a larger proportion of old soldiers without materially diminishing the numbers in the Reserve. Three objections may possibly be urged to this:—

1st.—The shorter the term with the colours the more ready are young men to enlist (and *vice versa*), especially those belonging to the better class, who do not join the Army from necessity.

2nd.—The increase of the pension list, which means less money for the active Army; and

3rd.—The increased age of the Reserve men, which means more wives and children; not only to pay, but to tear the husbands and fathers from, who will raise their voices against the Army.

Twenty-one years with the colours unfits a soldier for most other callings, and the pension is too small creditably to support a man without further assistance. The recruit-giving class know this well, and hence in some measure the decided preference they show to short service.

To induce good old non-commissioned officers to remain by offering a pension seems wise, but to offer it to all soldiers in the hope of detaining a few non-commissioned officers does not appear so judicious.

Would it not be well in some way to separate the consideration of "how to obtain good non-commissioned officers" from "how to obtain good privates," so that the one consideration need be no longer complicated by the other?

A proposal for this is given in a Note on page 70.

*(B) To re-establish the old Four-Company Depots.*

There is a strong desire among many for a return to the four-company depots. Before doing so, however, it will be well to consider what is now actually required of a depot, and whether a return to this system or to the depot battalions would really give what is wanted.

Primarily it is desired to have ready a supply of trained soldiers of all ages, the older and stronger to go abroad, while the younger ones are for a time employed at home. Recruits are required for the purpose of providing regiments on field or foreign service with men to replace those removed by death, disease, or through other causes; to complete the establishment of regiments suddenly augmented on being ordered abroad; and to keep up the regiments at home always to their full strength.

It is further desired to provide qualified officers, ready at any moment to take command of a regiment, and to supply the places of officers of the regimental staff with others who are well qualified; and further, it would be well if these institutions could also provide superiorly technically-educated non-commissioned officers for drill instructors, &c.

Parliament annually decides the number of soldiers of which the Army is to be composed, and leaves the commander-in-chief and the Secretary of State for War to distribute and apportion them to regiments.

Nothing could be better than the system now in vogue of

keeping, as far as possible, the regiments that will probably soon proceed abroad at a high establishment, while those lately returned home are allowed to dwindle to a low one.

The establishments are fixed, and may not be exceeded; but as regiments cannot exceed, they must sometimes fall below the proper strength, and in practice it is found they do so frequently to a very great extent.

Depots therefore should be so constituted as to remove the possibility of this fluctuation, either at home or abroad, and they should always be ready to supply drilled soldiers to regiments whenever and wherever required.

If a depot could be organised that would fulfil the foregoing conditions, it would not be necessary to call for volunteers, or deplete the ranks of one regiment to fill those of another.

Were the four-company depots to be re-established now, it is presumed they would be used only by regiments abroad, as those on the home establishment would not require them.

The brigade depot has certainly failed to fulfil the conditions required of it, and it is not easy to see how the four-company depot could do better.

For the most part it will seldom have sufficient ground on which properly to exercise its recruits, neither can it ever be expected to have together sufficient men to enable instruction to be carried on to the best advantage.

It can only do what has been done before, and is done now, viz., send the recruits to join their regiments as rapidly as possible. They would go imperfectly drilled, and in many cases, having been detained for months in garrison towns, would probably have become confirmed idlers and toppers, especially as their associates would, for the most part, be composed of men of indifferent character, sent home invalided (in many cases from their own excesses), or men who have "rejoined" from desertion.

Nor does it appear likely that the four-company depot could do much in training officers, for though a major would have some practice in commanding a small detachment, he could have none in field exercises, nor the other multitudinous duties of an officer commanding a regiment; indeed, it is not necessary, for the confidential reports give the names of hundreds of majors who are now fit for that position.

The young officer who acts as adjutant, as well as the sergeant-major, quartermaster-sergeant, and clerks, will pick up some useful knowledge, but whether it is desirable to go to much expense on this account seems doubtful.

As a resting place for infirm old soldiers, invalids, women, and children returned from the service companies, or as a place where captured deserters from headquarters can be temporarily relegated, and where regimental records can be kept in safe custody, the four-company depots will be as useful as the present brigade depots, provided they are not moved about the country as was formerly the case.

As regards their attracting recruits, it is not likely they will be more successful than brigade depots.

Indeed, if we except the linking together of battalions, with the attendant annual depletion of one to fill the ranks of the other (which, for many reasons, is a most objectionable practice), it is difficult, from an Army point of view, to see that the four-company depots will have any advantage over the brigade depot.

As an improvement on the present system, it would seem best, *if an entirely new plan be not inaugurated*, to look rather to the remodelling of the depot battalions than the revival of the four-company depots.

What were the objections to the depot battalions?

They were composed of the depots of eight or nine regiments, each depot consisting of two companies with their officers.

Each of these depots had their own regimental customs, which were jealously guarded; they were petty, but sometimes very inconvenient, and caused want of uniformity and trouble in the battalion. They were not infrequently found to vary when a new captain assumed charge, and it is to be feared they were sometimes put forward as excuses for minor irregularities. If the depot battalion colonel gave orders which were at variance with these, the captains often appealed to the colonels of their regiments, and this led to unpleasant correspondence, in consequence of which all correspondence between the officer commanding the depot battalion and the officers commanding the regiments was forbidden, except through the adjutant-general at the Horse Guards.

This state of matters sadly weakened the authority of the commanding officer of the depot battalion, and a general irritation more or less prevailed among the parts of the machine, on the smooth working of which its very existence depended. The matter seems a small one, but its effect was highly injurious.

This false "*esprit de corps*" has been the "canker at the root" which has ultimately caused the dissolution of all the depot systems inaugurated since the four-company depot, which alone was free from it. Any plan which will bring into close contact two or more regiments, or parts of them, in this way, is scarcely likely to succeed.

In a large number of cases colonels of regiments looked upon these depot companies as their own, and were sometimes disposed to resent what they considered the interference of the depot battalion colonel with them, and then, not infrequently, unpleasant correspondences arose between the commanding officer of the regiment and the depot. These difficulties diminished when home regiments were no longer required to form depots.

The senior captain of the depot had power to punish the men of both companies as well as commanding them, and, on the whole, they were made such distinct units that it proved impossible to weld them into a homogeneous whole.

There was also the objection that none of our depot systems have been free from, viz., mixing up invalids, deserters, &c. (men of bad character), with young recruits, at that time so susceptible of receiving impressions, and colonels were often too glad to get rid of indifferent soldiers by sending them to these institutions.

As a rule, officers took no interest in the drill of their men, and it was as well they should not, for the captain-adjutant and his staff of non-commissioned officers admirably carried out the drill duties, as far as the small number of men and the limited drill grounds permitted.

In some depot battalions a system of sending their depots on detachment prevailed, which was exceedingly detrimental.

If the depot battalions had been much larger than they were; if they had not been composed of a number of distinct commands, each desirous of prominently showing its regimental distinctions or differences; if the officer commanding the battalion had had more perfect control over the parts, or, at least, more allegiance from them; if the connection between the depots and their regiments could, for the time, have been entirely severed; if the recruits had been enlisted for the battalion, to be sent to that regiment most requiring them; and if invalids, deserters, and bad characters had been eliminated—then those admirably-conceived institutions would, no doubt, have proved a perfect success.

#### IV.

##### DIVISION DEPOTS.

##### A PROPOSAL FOR AN IMPROVEMENT ON BRIGADE DEPOTS.

(20th July 1879.)

After a trial of eight or ten years, it has become evident that the brigade depots do not fulfil the purpose for which they were formed.

In lieu of these it is proposed to establish **DIVISION DEPOTS** for the purpose of supplying with recruits all the regiments of a district, or even of two or three districts combined. The brigade depot has proved too small a unit for instructing, drilling, and furnishing recruits for regiments.

It is a thoroughly established fact that recruits, as a rule, when first attested, care little if at all what regiment they join, although, after having served in any one for a short time, they are, if of good character, reluctant to leave it, and the officers and non-commissioned officers who have drilled and disciplined them are still more reluctant they should.

There will probably, therefore, be no difficulty in enlisting for a division, in the first place, any number of men. After they have been thoroughly taught, they would be posted finally to regiments of the division, the recruits choosing their own corps as far as possible, but being selected according to the exigencies of the service, and according to their age and constitution—in the first place, the oldest being taken for service abroad. Many great advantages are likely to attend this proposed system.

1st. The facility of drafting to regiments requiring sudden augmentation a full number of recruits, ready drilled and of fair age.

2nd. One regiment, therefore, need not have its ranks thinned to fill those of another.

3rd. The volunteering system (except in the case of regiments that are above their establishment) would be almost wholly got rid of (unless from the Reserve) and the bounties saved.

4th. On emergency, volunteers might be taken, without any inconvenience, from one depot to augment the regiments of another division.

5th. Though regiments at home would continue recruiting for themselves, they would, when necessary, receive recruits from the division depots.

6th. Experiments on clothing, arms, and accoutrements could be well carried on at these depots.

Probably five or six would be found the best number for the United Kingdom, viz., four for England and Wales, one for Scotland, and one for Ireland.

When fairly organised, each such depot should pass through it 5000 or 6000 perfectly drilled and instructed soldiers annually.

The small strength of regiments, the absence in so many quarters of good drill and exercise grounds, appliances, &c., the numbers of small garrisons and the numerous detachments, the

large numbers of soldiers required for guard and fatigue purposes in many garrisons, delay or prevent the systematic and thorough instruction of recruits, who are for the most part hurried into the ranks before being perfect in their rudimentary teaching. All these difficulties will be absent from a division depot, and the regiments will no longer be inconvenienced by having large numbers of half-drilled men and recruits on their muster rolls.

It would be well that these depots had a maximum establishment, quite irrespective of the regiments they are intended to supply, and a separate uniform should be worn, not pertaining to any particular corps, though the depot would clothe the men in the uniform of the corps they are drafted to before their departure.

A limited number of active old soldiers—men selected from the regiments of the division or elsewhere for their good character—would be required as officers' servants, batmen, &c., to take charge of arms, and instruct the young soldier in his barrack-room duties, cleaning belts, &c. These should not exceed 10 to 12 per cent.

Division depots would also be found good schools for non-commissioned officers, who would remain only a few years, and then return to their regiments as drill instructors.

The officer instructors, as a rule, would be selected from regiments of the division for a term of three or five years, to be extended to three more if recommended for their usefulness.

The non-commissioned officers would be selected from regiments, and would ultimately, in many cases, make good sergeant-majors; and a considerable number of young lance-corporals might be taken, to prepare them for the sergeant's stripes.

The staff would consist of a brigadier-general or colonel-commandant, assisted by a lieutenant-colonel or major, a captain-adjutant, with 2 assistant adjutants, a quartermaster and assistant quartermaster, a paymaster, surgeon-general, and a surgeon-major, and, for every thousand men, 1 major, 4 captains, and 4 subalterns.

It will be observed that these depots are equally suited to supply recruits to regiments at home or abroad, during peace or war, in small numbers or in large.

Should the scheme here proposed meet with approval, it would seem desirable to establish an experimental depot (which could be done at small expense) at Shorncliffe, Chatham, or Aldershot. It would consist of the south-eastern and home districts, to which might afterwards be added the southern district. Should Shorncliffe or Chatham be selected, the depot would march to Aldershot



annually, and camp there for two months to practise outpost duty and complete musketry instruction.

## V.

### CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTIONS THAT MAY BE OFFERED TO THE SCHEME.

#### *(A) Too small a leaven of old soldiers.*

There is a point in the foregoing scheme for division depots which, in all probability, will be taken exception to by many, viz., collecting together such a large number of recruits with so small a leaven of old soldiers, viz., 10 per cent.

This is especially likely to be noticed, because it is opposed to what has hitherto been customary in line regiments, where it is usual to hear complaints raised if there are not on the muster rolls three or four old soldiers to each recruit; but, in considering this complaint, it should not be forgotten that hitherto it has been much the practice to allow recruits to find out a great deal of their duties from the old soldiers, instead of properly instructing them.

In many of our Militia regiments, especially those having two battalions, it is not uncommon to see 600 or 800 recruits assembled together annually under 1 officer and 20 or 25 sergeants, and drilled for six or eight weeks, giving little or no trouble, and making much progress.

If this can be done in one place, where the organisation is not of the best, there appears no reason why, in a perfectly organised camp of Regulars, five or six such bodies, each with the required number of selected officers and non-commissioned officers, could not get on equally well.

With Militia regiments a maximum percentage of 25 men, who have been through two or three trainings of twenty-seven days each, is found amply sufficient, and, therefore, it seems 10 or 12 per cent. of old selected line soldiers, with 5 per cent. of non-commissioned officers, would be amply sufficient for a division depot, especially when it be remembered that, though all the Militia men come in on the same day, the recruits of the division depots are arriving day by day all the year round.

While commanding a regiment not long ago some experience in this was gained by the writer. The battalion was at a minimum establishment; it gave four detachments, taking 300 old soldiers; 70 musicians lived by themselves, and many officers' servants and

men in married soldiers' quarters, left, after deducting casuals, only about 20 drilled soldiers with over 200 recruits.

Taking alarm at this, a report was sent to the general commanding the division, who declined to make any alteration, and the result was that during the time the regiment remained (eight or nine months) the recruits gave no trouble whatever, making more progress than usual.

It is not from motives of economy that it is proposed to limit the number of old soldiers in a division depot to 10 per cent., but to reduce the chances of the young soldier being led astray.

That part of the education of the recruit which requires a large leaven of old soldiers will be quickly learnt when, thoroughly well drilled and well instructed, he joins the regiment which he will finally make his home.

*(B) The desire of intending Recruits to join particular Regiments.*

It is urged by many that recruits have such a strong desire to engage for some particular corps that the fear of being sent to any other will operate against their joining a division depot.

Statistics do not bear this out; men for the most part join the Army for a living, and are indifferent as to which corps they may be sent.

In former days, when recruiting was principally carried on by depots or parties sent out from regiments, it was natural that intending recruits should wish to join the corps of which they had heard so much from these recruiting parties, but, where recruiting is carried on almost exclusively by other means, candidates for the service make no selection.

Some few, it is true, may wish to join particular regiments, and, when this is the case, it should be permitted them to do so.

It is more likely that the longer hours of drill might deter men from joining the experimental division depot, but this could not be the case when they were universally established.

Moreover, compensation would be found in the pleasanter way the skilled instructors would carry on the drill, and the fact that many men who passed through would become fitted for non-commissioned officers, and receive certificates to that effect.

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NOTE.—The foregoing is composed of several papers (or memoranda) on short service and depots written from time to time during the summer and autumn of 1879, and strung together in January 1880.

## **APPENDIX IV.**

### **NIGHT ATTACKS**

ON

**Fort-George, Inverness-shire, 6th November 1872**

AND ON

**Edinburgh Castle, 29th September 1873.**

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#### **ATTACK ON FORT-GEORGE.**

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##### **COLONEL SPROT'S REPORT.**

ON Wednesday, 6th November, I determined to practise the regiment under my command in night outpost duty, which before had never been done, and at the same time to try the effect of a night attack on the pickets, watching carefully both the attacking and attacked.

I had become impressed with the idea that at night small bodies of troops might act with much effect in taking or retaking decisive points or positions of importance. It was done by the Prussians in the late war, and might be done again; at any rate, troops should be somewhat prepared to resist, if not to make, such an attack.

At 10 A.M. the whole regiment was marched to the school—officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, and I gave them a short lecture as follows:—

I reminded them that at dusk the positions of the pickets and sentries were altered, the line being drawn closer, more sentries if possible posted, and that, though in the daytime it was desirable that a large portion of the pickets should sleep, at night its safety

depended on its own vigilance. I instructed them to post the sentries some 100 yards apart in the chain; that, whilst one looked attentively to his front, the other must patrol to his "right" till he communicated with the sentry on his right; that they should challenge all, and demand the countersign. Though much depended on the attention of the sentries, still more depended on the continual patrolling, and I ordered non-commissioned officers', and sometimes officers' patrols, to move continually along the front at 300 or 400 yards beyond the chain, one being sent out as soon as another had returned.

Then I told them that it was by the roads the principal danger must be guarded against, and there or thereabouts the pickets must be posted in support. I pointed out that at night it was difficult or impossible to see, and that two things should be specially remembered.

*First*, That the only indications those in rear had of the approach of the enemy were the flashes and sound of the rifles; that therefore the attacking party would certainly not fire; and that the sentries should keep up a very constant fusillade round the attacking troops as they retired; but that the other sentries should not without good cause discharge their rifles, as it might mislead.

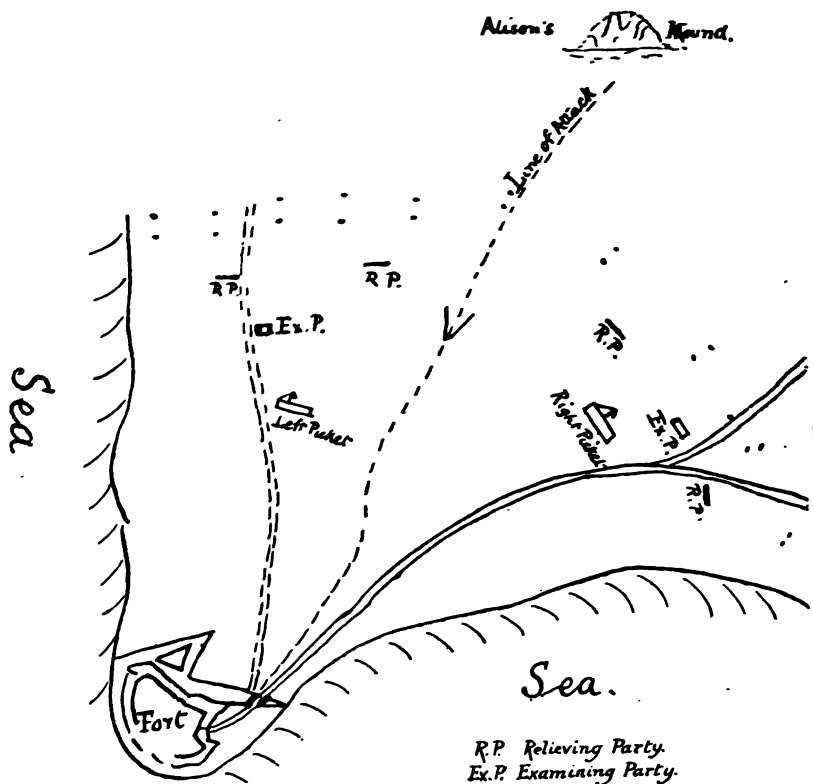
*Second*, That in the dark men might and must go close to the advancing party, examine it accurately, and then, taking advantage of the dark, double to the officer commanding their picket to give information most important and desirable.

After these instructions I ordered a parade at 4 P.M., in great coats and shakos for the defence, and with cross-belts, haversacks, and forage caps for the attack, the former with 5, the latter 10 rounds of ammunition; but, as men would undoubtedly be likely to come to very close quarters, bayonets could not be taken.

I also directed that (especially as this was the first time and an instruction parade) no tricks should be played to divert men's attention.

At 4-15 the party for the attack marched out and secreted itself behind "Alison's Mound," on the Nairn Road. Shortly after, preceded by the usual feelers, the pickets marched out.

The accompanying diagram will show the position of the fort, the roads, and the chain of sentries,



As the pickets (supports) would be planted on the roads, and thus on the flanks of the general line, I threw forward the centre, forming a salient angle, for this reason, that, if the flanks were first attacked, the pickets could resist until the sentries of the centre had run in, and, if the centre was attacked, the pickets, after the first indication of the attacking party's presence given by the fire of the sentries, would have time to converge, intercept, and oppose the attacking party at a point nearer the fort over which they must pass.

Having made this arrangement, I sent a message to the officer commanding the attacking force to dispatch four of his men to test the line. That was to see if there was any part of it through which they could pass unobserved. (*Note.*—This is done by 91st on all occasions of outpost. It is an excellent plan to keep the sentries alert, and cause the captains to use greater care in selecting

the sentries' posts.) He did so, but gave them, notwithstanding my previous directions, orders which deprived me of the power of determining whether the line was impervious or not. Having reminded the pickets that, if one was driven back, they both must retire, and that they must never remain to have their flanks turned, I went over to take command myself of the attacking party.

Just at this moment a very black cloud passed overhead and heavy rain fell, which rendered the night pitch dark. It was then about a quarter to 6.

I ordered the attack to be made on the centre of the chain in *perfect silence*—not a shot to be fired without orders. Ranks were five paces apart, and the men opened out to arm's distance to enable them the better to cross the very rough ground.

I directed the guide to a point on the distant horizon, and the word "Quick March" was given. After advancing a short distance it was evident to me that, if the party were suddenly halted to fire, the front rank would be in danger from the rear in the dark and confusion, and, besides that, the fire would be reduced to half what it might be. I therefore ordered the rear rank to run up into the intervals, and again opened out the files on the march.

The attack advanced to the sentries, were challenged, but did not reply; then the sentries in the vicinity commenced and kept up a fire—the pickets retired and converged.

Shortly after passing the sentries a circumstance occurred which was worthy of note, as it convinced the leaders of the pickets (who before that were in doubt) that a force was approaching, and showed them its size. The captain with the attacking party suddenly halted and fired a volley into a whin bush, believing it to be a picket drawn up to receive him.

Immediately after the officer commanding the left picket sounded his bugle, which indicated his whereabouts, and gave the attacking party an opportunity of avoiding this body.

When the attacking party got upon the road, one of the pickets opened fire (a volley), which the attacking party, guided by the flash, at once returned, halting as usual to load, and again firing. It was evident to me this would not do, so I ordered the word "Quick March" to be given as soon as the volley was discharged, men loading on the march and indicating their readiness by sloping arms, then as soon and whenever the enemy showed by their fire where they were, "Halt, fire a volley" was given, and again "Quick March" the moment it was discharged. Here the pickets appeared

to me to commit a mistake—they chose the gorge through the glacis to make their defence, passing through it in close order, firing and retiring alternately, as in street firing. It would have been better had they at once passed through the gorge to the more open ground, opened out to arms' distance, and then fired kneeling, alternately running *through* each others ranks; they would thus have fired upon the attack while compressed in the gorge, they themselves being more extended, instead of the reverse being done. Eventually, this did take place, for the attacking party were forced to close and charge through the gorge in a solid mass.

The picket having retreated into the fort with the attacking party at their heels, the commanding officer's bugle sounded the "Halt."

The officers who took part sent me in their reports, which may be read with some interest. In summing up, I came to the following conclusions:—

*1st.* The attacking party must advance in single rank at arms' distance, with the captain on the *flank* slightly in advance.

*2nd.* They must advance in *perfect* silence, without firing, until fired upon by a *compact body*.

*3rd.* They cannot advance in more extended order than arms' distance, and can do nothing against single men in the dark. They must depend most upon "l'arme blanche."

*4th.* If called upon to fire, they must "Halt, fire a *volley*," and march on at once, for surely the adversary will fire where he saw the flash. The attack must advance to charge—the bayonet is the weapon at night.

Again, the pickets, on very dark nights, cannot keep individuals from passing through the lines (for certain) with sentries at 100 yards.

Great reliance must be placed on patrols to the front.

When an enemy is detected, he must be examined carefully by a non-commissioned officer or man (singly), who, having ascertained his strength, must run off to the picket with information. He is in no danger—single men cannot be hit in the dark.

Great dependence must be placed on listening, however much they may try it. Bodies do not advance in perfect silence; there is a continued low cackling.

The position of the attacking force can only be known by the firing. Sentries, whilst retiring, must therefore keep up a continual peppering on the advance party.

The mode of firing, advancing, or retiring apply equally to both parties.

On the whole, this night attack was well done on both sides. The points I most noted are as follows:—

There is more vigilance wanted on the part of the sentries.

They frequently do not enforce their challenge of "Halt, and give the countersign," and, from habit, are too apt to let the answer "Friend" suffice.

They are too slow in watching and following the retiring line as indicated by the flashes.

The order for men in the chain to examine the approaching body, run back to the picket and report, was entirely disregarded.

Men going over rough ground in the dark, however much they try to keep silence, cannot resist making ejaculations, non-commissioned officers and officers giving instructions, &c., so that a continual cackling is going on.

Though opened out, they cannot resist the tendency to close towards the pivot, though no attempt is made to preserve dressing.

From the habit of going behind his company, the captain cannot keep on the flank, therefore he cannot see, and the result is mistaking bushes for pickets.

Of the officers' reports, Captain St. Leger notes that the back ground against which sentries are posted should be considered; that men fire too high; and that he found great use for his whistle—the 91st was the first regiment to revive the use of the Light Infantry whistle in 1872—with which officers and non-commissioned officers should be supplied.

Captain Gurney had great difficulty in communicating with his sentries and preventing their being out-flanked, the complaint of both captains; both also suggest that sentries should stop occasionally to listen and look back and around them.

Major Kirk thinks sentries should recognise by some means each other, and not continually challenge and demand the countersign.

He reports that the instructions to examine the advancing body, run back and report, were entirely neglected. Had the attack been made in skirmishing order, the defenders might have held them in check much longer, he says; I do not see this myself, but any attack thus made would undoubtedly prove abortive.

The signallers were out with lamps, and messages from myself to the fort, and *vice versa*, were well and quickly sent, and were of considerable use. The lamps are terribly apparent, and would be grand marks for an enemy's long range rifle.



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**THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL'S REPORT.**

I am not much in favour of night attacks, still I think Colonel Sprot deserves credit for endeavouring to perfect his men in every description of duty. Great pains seem to have been taken, and everything seems to have gone off satisfactorily.

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*"The Scotsman," July 12th, 1901.*

Continued interruption of telegraphic communication in the Western Transvaal has delayed till now news of the operations of Lord Methuen in that district last week. On the 3rd inst. Lord Methuen made a night march from Zeerust to Enselberg, where he surprised and captured a Boer laager. He made 43 prisoners, and captured 29 rifles, 2000 rounds of ammunition, 38 waggons, and a large number of sheep and cattle. Forty Boer families were taken to the nearest refugee camp. The enemy left 3 dead on the field. The commandant escaped. The Zeerust district is still unsettled, but progress is being made in restoring order, and "a different aspect of things" is soon expected.

Night attacks on the Boers are also being made in the Orange River Colony, and those from Edenburg are having good effects. Eighteen Boers have surrendered during the last few days, while over 50 have been captured. *The prisoners state that the Boers are very uneasy in consequence of the night attacks.*

**THE WAR—THE BRITISH NIGHT ATTACKS.**

(PRESS ASSOCIATION WAR SERVICE.)

*ZEERUST, Monday, July 8th.*

Lord Methuen left for Enselberg on the night of the 3rd inst., and surprised and captured a Boer laager, taking 43 prisoners, 29 rifles, 2000 rounds of ammunition, 553 heads of cattle, 600 sheep, 38 waggons, and 600 bags of grain.

Forty Boer families were also brought in.

The enemy left 3 dead on the field, the commandant taking to flight. Lord Methuen, however, hopes to overtake him.

Our casualties were 2 wounded.

Telegraph and postal communication is still interrupted.

The new Magistrate has taken up his duties, but the district is still unsettled. As several columns are operating in the neighbourhood, a different aspect of things is anticipated in the near future.

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EDENBURG, *Wednesday.*

*Our night operations are evidently having a good effect.*

Eighteen Boers have surrendered during the last few days, while over 50 have been captured.

*The prisoners state that the Boers are very uneasy in consequence of the night attacks.*

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### ATTACK ON EDINBURGH CASTLE.

Considerable astonishment was created yesterday afternoon in the minds of the promenaders and residents in the principal thoroughfare of the Old Town at the sight of a numerous body of troops marching at the double up Canongate and High Street followed by a company of skirmishers, who took advantage of every bit of shelter to cover their retreat while being hotly pursued by another body of men in white uniforms. The curiosity, if not alarm, excited by such an unwonted spectacle was increased when, shortly after, the sharp rattle of musketry was heard coming from the direction of the Esplanade and West Princes Street Gardens, succeeded in a few minutes by the boom of heavy cannon from the Castle ramparts. A rush was made up the Lawnmarket to the Esplanade, but alarm, if any really existed, was speedily abated, and curiosity satisfied by the information that this was but the finale of a very interesting sham fight which had taken place in the Queen's Park, and of a feint attack upon the Castle. In fact, the troops garrisoned in the Castle under the command of Colonel J. Sprot had been taking part in one of those strategic field days, from the experience gained in which confidence in actual warfare can alone be confirmed, whether in the officers or the men of our Army.

About 9 o'clock yesterday morning the depot company of the 72nd Regiment, under the command of Captain Simpson, was despatched from the Castle to take up a position in the neighbourhood of Duddingston, there to represent an enemy whose design was to attack the city and Castle from the north-east. So as to secure a thorough and well-marked distinction between the enemy and the defenders, the men of the 72nd were dressed in white jackets and forage caps. With the exception that they were to make the best fight in a certain direction, namely, towards the north-west, the enemy were left entirely to their own discretion as to the movements by which the object in view should be accomplished. At half-past 9 over 200 men of the 91st Princess

Louise Argyllshire Highlanders, under the command of Major Greig, Captain Allison, and Captain Gurney, marched to the Queen's Park to represent the army of defence. They were dressed as usual in their red jackets and shakos. The first manoeuvre executed by the defenders was the necessary one of throwing out a line of outposts. Commencing near the gate of Parsonsgreen, the line of sentries was extended along the ridge of the Whinny Hill, parallel to the carriage drive, till opposite Dunsappie Loch, thence still following the sinuosities of the drive along the back slope of Arthur's Seat, where Prince Charlie's Highland Army lay encamped on the night before and the evening after the battle of Prestonpans. The broken ground at the Loch Craggs and Samson's Ribs interrupted the continuity of the pickets, and the right company, under the command of Captain Gurney, was drawn up in independent formation on the sloping ground a short distance south of the Albert Gate at St. Leonard's. To preserve communications, however, connecting files were thrown out by way of the Windy Gowl and the upper drive to Captain Allison's company, which was picketed on the back slope of Arthur's Seat. When the troops were thus disposed, they presented a picturesque appearance. From the carriage drive, all that could be seen of the defending army was a long line of sentries pacing the ridge of the hill with bayonets flashing in the sunlight, but a spectator on Arthur's Seat might have watched the pickets hidden from the enemy behind the rising ground, and the main body of troops lower down the valley ready and eager for the expected attack. The defending army having been so disposed, Colonel Sprot and Major Kirk paid a visit to all the outposts and sentries to see that every due precaution against surprise had been taken. Luncheon of beer and bread and cheese was served out to the men, each company being supplied by the commissariat carts in turn.

At 1 o'clock the signal was given to the enemy to attack when and in what manner they thought best. The main point of defence was to be Holyrood Gates, and the commander of the invading force seemed to think that this could be best accomplished by turning the right flank of the defenders, pushing on down the valley between Kaim Head, St. Leonard's Hill, and Salisbury Craggs, and gain the gates before the main body and left wing of the defending army could march by way of Parsonsgreen and the parade ground to check the advance. With this object in view, Captain Simpson despatched Lieutenant Garnet with a detachment of troops by a cross road nearly opposite Janefield, at the Portobello end of Duddingston. The road leads round the southern

shore of Duddingston Loch to the old Dalkeith or "Innocent" railway. Lieutenant Garnet's troops descended to the railway track, and, advancing under cover of the embankments, crept towards the Albert Gate till opposite the Wells o' Weary. Here they scaled the embankment and opened fire on the right flank of the defenders—Captain Gurney's company. This was the signal for Captain Simpson to advance with his main body from the village of Duddingston by the lower carriage drive and attack in front. Captain Gurney and his troops made a strenuous resistance to the attempt to turn his flank, but it so far proved successful that he was obliged to draw back his right and retreat in skirmishing order. Lieutenant Garnet followed up his advantage, and, being joined at the Albert Gate by Captain Simpson and the main body of the enemy, the combined forces were hurled against the retreating right wing of the army of defence. Fierce resistance was, however, made, and the retreat was covered by a line of skirmishers stretching across the valley between the Salisbury Crags and St. Leonard's Hill. These operations were conducted with the most admirable precision, and the manœuvres, as observed from the heights on either side of the valley, were picturesque and interesting. In the meantime, the sound of firing on the right announced to the van and left wing of the defenders, under the command of Major Greig and Captain Allison, that the enemy were attacking the right. Pickets drew in their sentries, and the troops put at the double were concentrated on the left shoulder of the Whinny Hill. So soon as they got into position, the defenders moved down the carriage road past Parsonsgreen and St. Margaret's Loch, and in close column of companies advanced to the relief of the right wing, which by this time had retreated to a point opposite Dumbiedykes Cottages. A check was thus given to the enemy, but only for a short time, for the enemy was supposed to be largely reinforced. The gallant stand of the right wing of the army of defence having saved the retreat of the main body and left wing, nothing more could be accomplished in the face of superior numbers, and a retreat on the Castle was found necessary. Major Greig was ordered to hold the Holyrood Gate leading out of the park as long as he could, to allow the defenders to fall back on the Castle, and, when that position was no longer tenable, he was to retreat up the Canongate in the wake of the main body. A series of furious assaults were made on the gates by the enemy, but under the withering fire of Major Greig's troops the invaders were held at bay for some time. Slowly Major Greig retired up the ascent of the Canongate by alternate

half companies, while his skirmishers continued to harass the pursuing foe. Advantage was taken of all the crossings to make a stand, and some interesting manœuvring took place round the Tron Church, much to the surprise of the passers by, who could not understand what was afoot. Meanwhile, the defenders retreated into the Castle and manned the ramparts, while a detachment of the 91st, which had been trained during the past winter to work the fort guns, were told off to manipulate the 68-pounders in the Half-Moon Battery. Fire was opened on the enemy while Major Greig's troops then retired into the Castle in half companies; the gates were closed, and the drawbridge was supposed to be drawn up. From the Castle walls and every coign of vantage the infantry opened fire on the enemy so soon as he appeared in open ground. The attackers, finding from the fierceness and concentration of the fire that there was no chance of forcing the gates, sought cover in West Princes Street Gardens, and endeavoured for a time to keep down the fire from the Castle walls. In this they were successful, and, what with the cannonade and the musketry fire, the enemy were soon defeated and compelled to retreat. Thus ended a very interesting and instructive sham battle, throughout which the men displayed admirable coolness, decision, discipline, and precision in the execution of many new and difficult movements.

The troops were afterwards drawn up in the Castle square, where they were addressed by Colonel Sprot, who, along with Major Kirk and Adjutant Streeter, had superintended the whole operations of the day. The colonel expressed himself as highly pleased with the dashing manner in which the troops had executed the various manœuvres, and afterwards took leave of the depot of the 72nd Regiment. A depot, he said, had never been under him with which he was more sorry to part than with that of the 72nd. The conduct of both officers and men had been praiseworthy in the highest degree.

*Extract from "The Scotsman," September 30th, 1873.*

Following up the series of manœuvres which have taken place during the summer months, another sham fight and attack on Edinburgh Castle took place yesterday afternoon and evening, the incidents of which were of an unusually interesting nature. At 3-30 P.M. the 91st Regiment and the depot of the 73rd Regiment, to the number of 330 (including the band and the sappers), paraded on the esplanade in field-day order under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Sprot. After the force had been drawn up,

15 rounds of blank cartridge were served out to each man, and a careful examination of the rifles was made before marching off. The A company of the 91st, consisting of 40 men and 3 sergeants, who were to take the part of the enemy for the afternoon, were drawn up by themselves, under the command of Captain and Adjutant Chater and Lieutenant Preston. The whole of the troops carried their overcoats in slings, but, as a distinguishing mark, the enemy alone wore haversacks. Neither the defenders nor the enemy carried their side-arms. The general idea of the operations was that a force, having crossed the Tweed at Berwick, was advancing in the direction of Edinburgh, and that on receipt of this intelligence the troops in the Castle were to form a line of outposts on the east side of Arthur's Seat. Accordingly, Adjutant Chater marched off his men about a quarter to 4 o'clock, and proceeded by the Canongate and the Queen's Park to Jock's Lodge toll bar, at which place he turned off to the village of Duddingston. The defending force was divided into two large companies, each consisting of about 80 men; No. 1 being under the command of Major Bruce, and No. 2 under the command of Major Greig. Headed by the brass and fife bands, this force left the esplanade at 4 o'clock and marched down Canongate to the Queen's Park attended by a large and miscellaneous following. On arriving at the triangular plot of ground which faces the park entrance, the defending force was divided—Major Bruce's company proceeding along by St. Margaret's Loch, and Major Greig's by the foot of Salisbury Crags, in the direction of Duddingston. On reaching the east end of St. Margaret's Loch, Major Bruce posted the first of his sentries; and as he marched along the skirts of Whinny Hill other outposts were planted on advantageous situations. Major Greig, on the other hand, commenced to post his sentries at the Hawse, and continued the line along the Queen's Drive until his left joined with Major Bruce's right near Dunsappie Loch. Dunsappie Rock, which commands a view of the quarter from which the enemy were expected to advance, was also occupied by a picket from Major Bruce's company. Behind the sentries, at various points on the hill, pickets were stationed, upon which the sentries, if attacked, could fall back. When the disposition of the troops was completed, Lieutenant-Colonel Sprout rode along the whole line, and minutely examined the several positions which had been assigned to the men by their officers. Meanwhile, the enemy, under Adjutant Chater, had reached the village of Duddingston, which was immediately occupied, and sentries posted at every available outlet to prevent a surprise. Near the gate

leading to the park a demonstration was made, but this was met by a detachment sent out by Major Greig, and after a short but sharp skirmish, the enemy, finding the defending line too strong for them, retreated again into Duddingston, where they were suffered to lie without molestation. Meanwhile, two signalmen had ascended Arthur's Seat, and kept up a communication by means of flags with other signalmen who accompanied the pickets. Owing, however, to the thick haze that hung over the city, it was found impossible to communicate with the Castle. The retreat was sounded about 6 o'clock, and then the position of the pickets and outposts was altered, in accordance with the established rules for night duty. Major Bruce's men retired from the east side of Whinny Hill, and debouched by numerous passes into St. Anthony's Valley, along which they marched until they came to St. Margaret's Loch. From this point sentries were posted along the road to Holyrood, a picket being stationed on the parade ground to guard against a surprise from the north. A ludicrous incident happened to one of Major Bruce's pickets in its retreat from Whinny Hill. On approaching St. Margaret's Well, a sentry who had been stationed there challenged the advancing party, and, as the non-commissioned officer in command could not give the password, the sentry ordered them to halt on pain of being fired into. This they were compelled to do until the sergeant-major was appealed to, when, the sentry being then satisfied as to the character of the picket, it was allowed to proceed. On the right Major Greig withdrew his sentries from the heights facing Duddingston, and concentrated them in the valley between the foot of the Craggs and St. Leonard's Hill, the latter post being his base of operations. It was now quite dark, but it may be said that the most interesting part of the programme was still only about to commence. It was supposed that the enemy's advance guard had reached Portobello, and that, having failed during the day to reconnoitre the defensive position, they had now determined to make a reconnaissance in force. Accordingly, after sunset, Adjutant Chater moved his men cautiously out of Duddingston, and proceeded under the cover of the boundary wall in the direction of Meadowbank. Apprehensive, however, of falling in with the defenders' sentries, he moved very warily, and necessarily occupied a considerable time in crossing over to the Park Lodge at Meadowbank. Meanwhile, the pickets who were stationed at Holyrood were wondering what had become of the enemy, and, as 7 o'clock and then 8 o'clock passed without any demonstration being made in their front, they piled arms, and proceeded to make themselves

as comfortable as possible. Scouts were sent out, but not a scrap of information could be obtained regarding the enemy's whereabouts, and at last Lieutenant-Colonel Sprot, who was the only mounted officer on the ground, rode over to Duddingston, and learned that the village had been evacuated at least an hour previously. Having struck the road leading from Meadowbank to Holyrood, Adjutant Chater at once moved his men forward, but, as a feint, he sent out a sergeant and 8 men to cross the heights overlooking St. Margaret's Loch, with orders to attack the defenders' sentries if these were fallen in with, and then retreat and join him on the road. So stealthily did the enemy move that his approach was not discovered until he was close upon the defending force. About 20 minutes past 8 o'clock Lieutenant-Colonel Sprot rode up to the picket, which was stationed at St. Margaret's Well, and informed the officer in command that he had better retire, as the enemy seemed to have lost the way. He had hardly finished speaking when a sharp volley out of the darkness in front told him how far he had mistaken the stuff his opponents were made of. So complete was the surprise, that three of the enemy were actually through the defenders' line of posts before their presence was observed. Without a moment's hesitation, however, Colonel Sprot called on his men, who immediately stood to their arms and poured a murderous fire into the space where a minute before the enemy had shown themselves. Adjutant Chater on his side was equal to the occasion, for, immediately on delivering their fire, he doubled his men to the right, and so escaped in the darkness scot free. Hearing the firing, the party whom the Adjutant had sent to scour the heights immediately joined the main body of the enemy, and, with this reinforcement, the advance was continued, and the outposts of the defenders driven in at all points. At the Holyrood garden wall a desperate conflict ensued, and the scene was of the most exciting description, although the operations on the part of the defenders were somewhat impeded by the crowd of spectators who had by this time assembled. Coming along at the double the enemy took possession of the footpath skirting the wall, and kept up a brisk fire on the defenders, who beat a hasty retreat along the drive, stopping to reply, however, as they went. At the gates a stand was made, and again at the fountain they halted and delivered a well-directed fire upon their advancing opponents, which, however, had not the effect of stopping their victorious march. Meantime, Major Greig, having heard the firing, came along a short distance in the direction of Holyrood, but, learning that he would be of no use there as the



other division was in full retreat, he marched his men through the wicket at the foot of Arthur Street and along by Dumbiedykes and the South Back of Canongate, intending, if possible, to reach the Castle in time to take part in its defence. Coming along at the double he succeeded in effecting a junction with Major Bruce at the top of St. Mary's Street, and the united force continued their march up High Street in good order, closely pursued by the enemy.

The retreating party was expected to reach the Castle gates about 7 o'clock, and large numbers of soldiers and their friends awaited with considerable curiosity, and not a little impatience, the arrival of the outposts. The signalling, which had been carried on during the afternoon by means of flags, was continued with lanterns as soon as darkness set in, and the officer in the Castle to whom this duty fell was beset on all sides by questions as to the position of the opposing forces. It was near 9 o'clock when the first alarm was sounded, at which time the advanced outpost could be dimly discerned emerging from the Lawnmarket on to the Esplanade. In a very short space of time the Esplanade, which was dotted here and there with groups of spectators, assumed an aspect at once warlike and picturesque, for from the Castle ramparts could now be seen the retreating force hurrying up to the gates, closely followed by the enemy. Once safe within the gates, Major Bruce's company, being first, proceeded to the Half-Moon Battery as the most commanding position from which to repel the attack, while Major Greig's division manned the lower barrier. In order to disclose the movements of the enemy, a fire was lit in the grating near the flagstaff, and this shed a glare over the Esplanade in which the red coats of the enemy were clearly discernible as they crept from under the shadow of the houses. Deploying into skirmishing order, the attacking force advanced across the Esplanade, keeping up a sharp fire against the embrasures of the Castle. As the skirmishers came within range, they were saluted with a vigorous fire from the Half-Moon as well as the lower ramparts flanking the gateway of the fortress, and the scene for some minutes presented a wonderfully life-like picture of actual warfare. In the very thick of the contest the shrill sound of the "fire-bugle" announced to those within the Castle that one of the enemy's shells had taken effect upon that part of the buildings known as Crown Square, which includes the soldiers' quarters, the sergeants' room, and the regimental canteen. Anon all was bustle and rushing to and fro. The G Company

manned the fire-engine, and directed a jet of water on the supposed conflagration, while others continued to resist the attack which was pushed forward with much spirit in the teeth of a galling fire. The enemy, having worked his way across the Esplanade, made a determined rush at the Castle gate, but only to recoil after a brief struggle before the fire with which he was saluted from the front and flank. Repulsed in this direction, he made another demonstration more to the right, but this seemed merely intended to cover the retreat, which brought the manœuvres to a close. While all this was going on, the Esplanade presented a most effective piece of spectacular display. From the flaming beacon on the ramparts a strong light was cast on the bronzed countenances of the gallant 91st and their brethren of the 73rd, who were lying in every possible position among the guns in the battery, peering through the embrasures, which shot forth incessant tongues of flame; in the background were the excited spectators, civilian as well as military, their faces all lit up with the same ruddy glare—the whole affording such a combination of strong lights and deep shadows as would have formed a fine subject for Salvator Rosa. With the extinguishing of the beacon the firing gradually ceased, and although no triumphant shout announced that the besieged had defended their position, it was generally understood that such had been the case. Before dismissing his men, Adjutant Chater complimented them upon the steadiness and quietness with which they had carried out his commands during the afternoon and evening.